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DEFENCE

OF

MODERN CALVINISM:

CONTAINING AN

EXAMINATION

OF

THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN'S WORK,

ENTITLED A

REFUTATION OF CALVINISM.

BY EDWARD WILLIAMS, D. D.

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PREFACE.

The Author's first intention was merely to incorporate a few Strictures on Bishop Tomline's "Refutation" in a new edition of another work, on Divine Equity and Sovereignty,—which he still means to publish. This design was accordingly announced; but finding many of his friends desirous of having the Strictures in a detached form, and containing a professed Reply to his Lordship's attack on modern Calvinists, he has taken their advice; and now offers his "Examination" to the candid perusal of the dignitary whose work is the subject of it, and to the tribunal of the public.

The term "Modern Calvinism," which expresses the Calvinism here "defended," is adopted for three reasons. First, because this is what his Lordship evidently wishes to oppose, and by the rapid spread of which he appears to be displeased. He is aware that Calvinism is industriously and successfully propagated,---and by some obnoxious passages out of CALVIN's Works he endeavours to convince the public mind, that such tenets ought to be exploded. It is therefore proper that the public should be also aware, that the Calvinism of the body of people, attacked indiscriminately by his Lordship, does not include the whole of what he ascribes to them. A second reason is, because the great majority of those who pass under the general denomination, in modern times, regard some of CALVIN's positions as mere exceptionable inferences, which he has drawn from parts of his own system with too much haste, or

too little caution. They consider these inferences (especially some deduced from the doctrine of divine decrees,) as injurious excrescences, which deform the general beauty of his theological scheme, and which do not contribute to its real strength. In brief, they consider his fundamental premises, viewed in their proper light, as neither requiring nor admitting some of his conclusions, which have given just offence to a large portion of Christians who still retain his name,—and who are induced to retain it (as a term of distinction) because they apprehend that no other of the reformers, of whatever country, nor even any of the Christian Fathers, have so beautifully exhibited, or so ably defended the scripture doctrine of Sovereign Grace. A third reason is, because the modern Calvinists in general, in this country, do not adopt the ecclesiastical discipline which was originally included in

the term Calvinism. These considerations justify, to the Author's own mind, the ground he has taken, as well as the title of his Book.

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MODERN CALVINISM,

&c.

CHAP. I.

AVOWED SENTIMENTS OF THE BISHOP ON ORIGINAL SIN, FREE WILL, AND THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, EXAMINED.

SECT. I.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on ORIGINAL SIN, examined.

§ 1. What is a fair mode of enquiry on controverted subjects. § 2. The subject stated.

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§ 1. ONE of the fairest methods of examining his work that an author can desire, is to state in his own words the sentiments he avows, and then to try them by that standard

which the nature of the subject legitimately requires. This is what the writer of the following strictures very sincerely desires to do, in the most respectful manner; and if, in any instance he should fail in the attempt, he hopes it will not be imputed to an ungenerous design, or a cherished principle of disrespect. The hope of this construction he is the more disposed to entertain, as it is not his purpose to defend every expression or unqualified sentiment maintained by that author whom his Lordship of Lincoln undertakes chiefly to refute,—and as he is not conscious of aiming to serve any party, at all hazards, but rather to promote the cause of truth in the spirit of Christian benevolence.

§ 2. On the different subjects debated, many things are advanced by his Lordship which are maintained alike by himself, and by those whom he professedly opposes. It would be impertinent to enlarge on those things; and to dwell minutely on the smaller shades of difference, would lead to a needless prolixity. For every important purpose, I conceive, it will be sufficient to notice the most radical points in which the minor variations are virtually included. Those points on the subject of original sin, may be reduced to three heads, *viz.* That original righteousness is not entirely lost—that

every good affection was not eradicated—and that the power of obeying still remains. These positions constitute a prominent part of his Lordship's avowed sentiments,—as will immediately appear from his own statements.

§ 3. His Lordship's avowal of the first of these positions is full and explicit, in the following words:—'In appealing to the public 'formularies of our church, I shall first notice 'the article upon Original Sin, in which it is 'said, that "man is very far gone from original 'righteousness:" this expression implies, that '*original righteousness is not entirely lost;* that 'all the good qualities and principles, with which 'man was at first created, are not absolutely 'destroyed. That this is the plain and obvious 'sense of the passage, is evident from the following circumstance: when the Assembly of 'Divines, in the reign of Charles the First, 'undertook to reform, as they called it, our 'Articles according to the Calvinistic creed, 'they proposed to omit the words, "man is 'very far gone from original righteousness," 'and to substitute for them, "man is wholly 'deprived of original righteousness." It was 'admitted by both parties, that the two sentences conveyed ideas extremely different; and 'the proposed alteration was rejected by those 'who wished to maintain the ancient and esta-

'blished doctrine of the church of England, in 'opposition to the peculiar tenets of CALVIN.'*

§ 4. '*Original righteousness* is not entirely lost.' Let us calmly examine this position. While terms are left undefined, upon subjects wherein precision of language is more than ordinarily required, controversy is likely to become progressive and perplexing. If by "original righteousness" one person understands 'good qualities and principles' indefinitely, while another understands the perfection of them, what prospect is there of agreement, however extended the ratiocination? If his Lordship intend the latter part of the sentence quoted, to be explanatory of the former, he adopts the first of these meanings. But, abstracted from a peculiar connection, the common and obvious meaning of the term "*righteousness*" is rectitude, or perfect conformity to what is right. And the original righteousness of man, all must allow, consisted in nothing less than such perfect conformity.

§ 5. What evidence, therefore, is there, that the compilers of the Articles intended by "righteousness," good qualities and principles indefinitely, rather than the perfection of them? If they employed the term in a sense so unusual,

* Refut. p. 50.

in such a connection, they must have been remiss, in point of precision, not to state it. But to suppose this, where precision must have been a leading design, is uncharitable. It is not therefore by any means to be assumed, that the framers of the Articles meant by "righteousness," good qualities, and principles indefinitely, rather than the perfection of them. They speak of a *standard* from which "man is far gone;"—but an indefinite degree of good qualities and principles can be no standard. This would leave every thing undefined and uncertain. Whereas to say that man is far gone from the perfection of them, avoids an absurd, and establishes an important meaning.

§ 6. This perfection of good qualities and principles was entirely lost. For nothing less can be intended by being "far gone" from it. If men have gone astray from the fold of God, surely they have lost *entirely* the privilege of being in that fold. Their "original righteousness" included a complete standing in the divine approbation; and if that complete standing be now entirely lost, so likewise must that original righteousness by which it was secured. This, however, is not inconsistent with degrees of deviation from righteousness. For though "all we like sheep have gone astray," some by personal disobedience have gone farther than others.

And the article assures us, that "man (and there appears no ground of exception) is *very far* gone from original righteousness." Every man, therefore, has entirely lost the perfection of his nature,—which the term "original righteousness" very naturally, and most properly expresses.

§ 7. But even supposing, for argument' sake, that the term "righteousness," is intended to express 'good qualities and principles' indefinitely, still there is an important sense in which every man has lost it entirely. The same human qualities and principles which are good in one respect, may be bad in another, even in the most important acceptation. There may be in one man, compared with another, a stronger attachment to temperance, chastity, veracity, or honesty: but it would be fallacious to infer, on this account, that he is the subject of these virtues in a primary sense. He has less actual vice than many others, while, at the same time, his qualities and principles, operating another way, may be radically vicious. His virtues are merely negative;—he is less disposed to intemperance, unchastity, falsehood, or dishonesty. Such partial and comparative virtues may be found in an Atheist; but will any one say, that in such a character "original righteousness" is not entirely lost? Persons possessed

of such comparative good qualities and principles may be utterly destitute of a cordial submission to the will of God,—a genuine approbation of his holy law, or of his blessed gospel: and if these good qualities be absent, is not the being, the very essence of original righteousness, absolutely destroyed,—entirely lost?

§ 8. When the Assembly of Divines, in the reign of CHARLES the First, proposed to omit the words, "man is very *far gone* from original righteousness," and to substitute for them, "man is *wholly deprived* of original righteousness," how does it appear that their doctrinal view of the subject was materially different from that of the first compilers? It would be more accurate to say, with due deference to his Lordship, that the two sentences *might* convey ideas extremely different, than that they were intended to do so. The phrase "wholly deprived" might be objected to, lest any should infer, that the cause of it was an arbitrary act of God, as contradistinguished from a voluntary act of man. It is natural to suppose a predilection in favour of an established formulary, where no important advantage could be proposed by adopting the alteration. The one mode of expression more strongly represents man as the author of his loss, while the other simply states the extent

of that loss, in a mode which *might* be perverted to a bad use. Considering man as a moral *agent*, he is "very far gone" from his original state, and as a *sufferer* he is "wholly deprived" of it. To have gone far, very far, from a given state of mind, must signify, if plain language have any definite meaning, that the *state* intended was "entirely lost;" and that, regarded as a privilege, man was wholly deprived of it.

§ 9. Upon the whole, therefore, it does not appear that the rejection of the Assembly's proposal implied any disagreement of sentiment, but rather turned upon the most unexceptionable mode of expressing it. The article, however, is sufficiently explicit in shewing that man has *lost* his pristine perfection, no less than if it were said, that he is "wholly deprived" of it. No man who is unchanged by gracious influence, has even the nature of true wisdom, much less its perfection. He is essentially defective as to the end he aims at, and consequently the means he adopts cannot have the nature of righteousness, whatever sagacity, or comparative wisdom, he may discover in the use of them.

§ 10. To insist much on this doctrine has the most salutary effect on the minds and conduct of men, as being very frequently attended

with a divine blessing and gracious influence; while a neglect of stating it in a close and searching manner, in a course of Christian instruction, is in fact found to be highly injurious to vital religion. Until men are thoroughly convinced of their deplorable defects, and their mental maladies, there is no probability that they will mourn for their sins, become poor in spirit, or hunger and thirst after righteousness. That unguarded and crude representations have been made of the doctrine is but too true; yet even this has not been so fatal to the interests of real Christianity as the contrary extreme. Because in the one case, however disgusting or frightful the representation may be, an appropriate remedy is held forth; whereas a picture encouraging self-flattery, tends to eclipse the grace of Christ, or to diminish, in the sinner's view, the gospel remedy. Among converts of the latter class, I should expect but little gratitude to God, or love to Christ, or zeal in propagating his gospel. How far this remark accords with matter of fact, is left with the candid enquirer to determine from observation.

§ 11. His Lordship farther asserts that every *good affection* was not eradicated. 'All idea 'of distinction between right and wrong was 'not obliterated from the human mind, or '*every good affection eradicated* from the human

'heart.'*—'The heart was in a high degree 'depraved, but *every good affection* towards God 'and towards man *was not totally extinguished.*'† —'Let us next consider the parable of the 'sower, and particularly the explanation of that 'seed which fell on good ground, and sprang 'up, and bare fruit; "that on the good ground," 'says Christ, "are they which in an honest and 'good heart, having heard the word, keep it, 'and bring forth fruit with patience:" here we 'have again our Saviour's authority for saying, 'that there is *some honesty, some goodness of heart* 'in the human race; and that different men 'possess these virtuous qualities in different 'degrees, since of the seed which fell upon good 'ground, some brought forth "an hundred fold, 'some sixty, some thirty."'‡

§ 12. 'Every good affection was not eradi-'cated—was not totally extinguished—there is 'some goodness of heart in the human race.' These positions appear to be advanced against the supposed tenets of Calvinists. But in one sense of the terms employed, they are not at all opposed to Calvinism; for what Calvinist would maintain that affections,—conjugal, parental, filial, paternal, friendly, patriotic, or loyal,—are not good? The question is, in what sense are

* Refut. p. 3. † Ibid, p. 10. ‡ Ibid, p. 14.

such affections good, previous to a supernatural influence? They are, doubtless, comparatively good; that is, compared with their opposites. Yet this they may be, while essentially defective compared with the will of God, and the revealed rule of righteousness; since they are exercised by many persons who are "fast bound with the chains of their sins," and in a very degraded state of moral depravity. A person may have a sincere and strong affection to another, which is good compared with "envy, hatred, and malice," without possessing what is essential to real virtue and moral goodness.

§ 13. What his Lordship asserts, that '*all* '*idea* of distinction between right and wrong 'was not obliterated from the human mind,' might lead the reader to suppose that Calvinists held the contrary opinion. So far however is this from being the case, that they feel no reluctance in extending the assertion to fallen angels, as well as to men; and are in the habit of reciting these words of their poet with approbation: "The devils *know*, and tremble too; but Satan cannot love."—But his Lordship proceeds to say, that 'every good affection towards *God*— 'was not totally extinguished.' That a carnal mind, under the dominion of sin, and led captive by Satan at his will, may have some sense of gratitude to the bountiful Creator and Benefactor,

and some kind of love to him, is readily granted; but the question is, whether that love has not in it "the nature of sin," while the object of it is made subservient to selfish ends,—such ends as are opposed to the standard of righteousness? This is what Calvinists maintain, according to the sacred oracles, which declare that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. They that are in the flesh cannot please God."*—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."†

§ 14. The observations made on the parable of the sower, will be thought by most readers, I presume, very remarkable. 'There is some 'honesty, *some goodness of heart* in the human 'race.' Supposing the four kinds of hearers to represent 'the human race,' three parts out of four appear fruitless,—*without* honesty or goodness of heart. How then can this be an apology in point for the honesty and goodness of 'the 'human race?' And respecting the fourth part, that bare good fruit in different degrees, what reason is there for concluding that the success

* Rom. viii. 7, 8. † 1 Cor. ii. 14.

was owing to some native goodness or honesty, rather than to divine grace? Has the Spirit of God no efficiency in preparing the heart, and ensuring success? The apostle of the Gentiles explicitly ascribes it to God. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."* The Calvinists, therefore, think it more scriptural, and more rational, to ascribe the different degrees of fruitfulness attending the preached gospel to divine gracious agency, than to 'virtuous qualities' possessed by the human race in different degrees, independently of that agency. Beside, as the truth of the gospel is supposed to be proclaimed in the hearing of all alike, if the cause of fruitfulness be ascribed to native virtuous qualities, and *all* the human race have *some* of these qualities; how comes it to pass that so large a proportion of mankind are represented by our Saviour as bringing forth *no* fruit?

§ 15. In the next place, his Lordship contends, that the *power of obeying* still remains. For thus he states and argues: 'We are told in 'the book of Genesis, that "the Lord had re-'spect unto Abel and to his offering;" and unto

* 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

'Cain he said, "If thou doest well, shalt thou 'not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, 'sin lieth at the door." May we not hence 'infer that the immediate sons of Adam lived 'under a divine law, which they had the *power* '*of obeying* or of disobeying?'*—'They were '*capable of obeying* it [a rule of life] although in 'fact their obedience has been very rare, and 'always imperfect.'†—'The article [on original 'sin] does not pronounce with the Calvinists, 'that man of his own nature *can* perform nothing 'but evil, but that he "inclineth to evil;" a 'doctrine fundamentally different, since an incli-'nation, though strong, *may* be conquered.'‡—'Those who saw and heard what Jesus did, '*were of themselves capable* of understanding that 'he "was the Christ, the Son of God."‖—'God 'gives to every man, through the means of his 'grace, a *power* to perform the conditions of the 'gospel.'§—These are his Lordship's avowed sentiments on the subject of human power.

§ 16. To every observant reader of moral and theological discussions, it must be very apparent, that ambiguity often attends the use of the word Power. In writers who do not define their terms, we find it, even in con-

* Refut. p. 4. † Ibid, p. 9. ‡ Ibid, p. 51.
‖ Ibid, p. 19. § Ibid, p. 64.

troversy, standing indiscriminately for physical strength, for opportunity of acting, for a sufficient inducement to act, and for moral ability. Now except a writer explain what *kind* of power he designs, there can be no close reasoning on the subject. I know of no Calvinist who denies that fallen man has power, in the sense of physical strength, to will or to act according to his pleasure,—or of opportunity of acting well if so disposed,—or of a sufficient inducement to act aright. The point, therefore, is simply this, Whether man in his native degeneracy, irrespective of gracious renewing influence from the Holy Spirit, has that kind of power which consists in a good disposition or inclination? and whether it renders a man 'capable, of himself,' to understand the spiritual design of the gospel, to love God supremely, to love the Lord Jesus Christ as a holy Saviour, and to approve unreservedly of God's "holy will and commandments?"

§ 17. That many carnal men are capable, in different degrees, of investigating the evidences of Christianity, and have power to point out with considerable force the criteria of revealed religion, is not to be denied. They may also perceive a degree of harmony in the divine dispensations, the reasonableness of many commands and obligations, and many wonderful traits of divine goodness and mercy, as well as

the equity of many awful judgments. But is this any sufficient proof that their heart is right with God, or that they have the root of sincere piety? They may be still under condemnation as practical unbelievers, and destitute of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord: though perceiving, and in some respects approving of better things, they may be the slaves of sin, totally averse from the yoke of Christ, and prevailingly actuated by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:" they may habitually be making "the pleasures of sin" their chief good; and, being thus in the flesh, they *cannot* please God, though possessed of physical powers, opportunities, and sufficient inducements.

§ 18. The scriptural account we have of Cain and Abel, affords no good evidence that either of them possessed a native moral ability to please God. Saint Paul explains the passage, and assures us, that "by *faith* Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." But that faith was not "of himself, it was the gift of God,"—for why should we suppose that it flowed from a source different from that of Christian faith? And again, what Calvinist would say, that Cain would not have been accepted, if he came to God with right ends and motives? They both had physical power,

a favourable opportunity, and a sufficient inducement for offering an acceptable service. The fault of Cain, therefore, was all his own; but it does not thence follow that the faith of Abel had no higher source than his own native power, or that God by his grace did no more for Abel than for Cain. Should any one be disposed to think that God was bound in *justice* to do as much for the one as for the other, let him calmly reflect, first, that it is degrading to the divine freedom, to suppose that he is obliged to do all the good that he can; secondly, that it is a reflection on the character of God, since it is evident in fact that he does more for some of his rational creatures in the matter of salvation than for others; and, thirdly, that to suppose God is bound in *justice* to exercise *mercy*, is a contradiction in terms: for what is mercy, what can it be, but a favour beyond the claims of justice?

§ 19. When the article declares that man of his own nature "inclineth to evil," it expresses that very impotence which Calvinists ascribe to man in his fallen state. And that this *is* their meaning, is plain from their constant avowal, that a spiritual change confers upon the soul no new physical power, but only a different inclination towards God and holiness. The influence it receives may be called "the spirit of power,"

whereby the mind is invigorated for holy obedience. That an inclination to evil *may* be conquered, is plain from the fact that in many happy instances it *is* conquered. But is it ever conquered without divine assistance? If the aid of grace be necessary, why should it be ascribed to man's native goodness of heart? If not necessary, why should we be exhorted to pray for it with importunity? And if Saint Paul testified that he was not "of himself" sufficient to think a good thought, with what propriety can it be asserted that an unconverted man, who "of his own nature inclineth to evil," is "of himself capable" of understanding, savingly, that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God?" Our Lord tells Peter that such knowledge was revealed to him by his heavenly Father. And Saint John affirms, that no man can say, that is, to saving purpose, "that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost." The apostle could not mean that no man, without the Holy Ghost, could say this in a cursory manner, or maintain it as a doctrinal truth, because the contrary is a plain fact. He must therefore intend to inculcate, that a just knowledge and cordial approbation of Jesus as the Christ, is from the Holy Spirit.

§ 20. When his Lordship asserts, that 'God 'gives to every man, through the means of

'his grace, a *power* to perform the conditions of 'the gospel,' the Calvinists have no controversy with him, except about the meaning of the term. Taking the word "power" for opportunity, or for a sufficient inducement, they admit the assertion as an important truth. But to suppose that every man, through the means of grace, has a prevailing inclination to perform the condition of the gospel, is contrary to indisputable fact: since the means of grace are to great numbers, through their own fault, "a savour of death unto death." In short, what we maintain is, that the power which man has lost, through original sin, is—an effectual or prevailing *inclination to good.*

SECT. II.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on FREE-WILL, examined.

§ 1. Sources of ambiguity in discussions about Free-Will. § 2. Wherein the freedom of the will consists. § 3. The idea of *will*, and that of its *freedom*, of different kinds. § 4. The Bishop's opinion stated.

§ 5. The sentiment that *impressions* made upon the mind depend on reason and Free-Will, examined. § 6. The Calvinistic sentiment stated and defended. § 7. God is under no obligation in justice to change any sinner's heart.

§ 8. That conversion is owing to the exercise of our *natural powers*, examined. § 9. The Calvinistic notion of conversion, stated and defended.

§ 1. Much of the ambiguity which attends discussions about Free-Will, arises from the want of precision in the use of this term. It would afford but little interest to enumerate the different acceptations in which it has been taken by controversial writers. What can be rationally meant by it, but the will in a state of freedom? When, therefore, it is said that man has free-will, it is the same as affirming that his will is free. But free from what? It is not free from divine energy supporting it in existence. It is not free from a perpetual tendency to apparent good; for in this must consist its glory and perfection; nor is it free from aversion to apparent evil, without which

aversion it could have no excellency. It is not free from being influenced by the disposition, whether that disposition be good or evil; otherwise we might as consistently trust an habitual thief, as an habitually honest man; we might give as easy credit to a known liar, as to a man of general veracity. When we apprehend the disposition to be evil, we always expect, other things being equal, the will to be influenced by it to unworthy ends. On the contrary, when we apprehend the disposition to be good, we expect the will to be influenced by it to ends and decisions which are laudable.

§ 2. The question returns, from what is the will free? In other words, wherein consists its freedom? Until this point be clearly ascertained by both parties, all disputing about "free-will" must be a mere war of words. What Calvinists maintain is, that the will, in its accountable actions, is free from constraint to evil, whether that evil be real or apprehended. Nothing but the supreme author of our being, can be supposed to constrain or impel the human will. He supports it in existence, indeed, and makes it act in the choice of its object; but that object is never chosen *as* evil, otherwise the possession of such a faculty would not be a blessing but a curse, and therefore unworthy of a beneficent Creator to confer

upon us. Nor is it constrained or impelled to real evil, except when, through the influence of prejudice, it is viewed as an eligible good. It is also free from a restraint from good, both real and apprehended. To suppose it restrained from apprehended good, would be to tantalize it,—to support an active principle in perpetual disappointment and wretchedness: while to suppose it restrained from real good, would be an aspersion on its Maker and Preserver, who has made real good its only satisfying portion. The human will, therefore, is free from constraint and restraint, in these respects, in its accountable elections. This is what modern Calvinists profess;—and it is difficult to conjecture what greater freedom his Lordship would claim for the human mind.

§ 3. It is worthy of remark, that while the idea of will is positive, as of an active power, that of freedom is negative, as of mere exemption—it is the bare denial of constraint and restraint. To suppose freedom or liberty, as predicated of the will, to be a power, or an active principle, superadded to the will, is to confound things which, in their proper nature, are totally different. It is to use words without distinct ideas. Whether his Lordship has kept his thoughts free from embarrassment on this subject, may deserve his reconsideration, especially

as much of his "Refutation" appears to turn on this important point.

§ 4. There are two things avowed by his Lordship, under the head of Free-Will, which require examination. First, that an impression on the mind depends on reason and free-will—and, secondly, that conversion is owing to the exercise of natural powers. There is a sense in which it is commonly known that Calvinists readily admit these positions; but they are here advanced by his Lordship in opposition to Calvinism, the growth of which he professes to impede. In fair construction, therefore, the positions must be meant in some other sense, which they do not avow. In matters of controversy, not to distinguish is to continue in a labyrinth.

§ 5. His Lordship states, that the impression which the truths of the gospel make upon the mind, depends on reason and free-will. His words, in their connection, are these: 'And surely the admonition which follows this 'parable, "Take heed therefore how ye hear," 'implies that the *impression* which the truths of 'the gospel make upon the minds of men, '*depends* upon the manner in which they attend 'to them, that is, upon the exercise of their

'own reason and free-will.'* This statement must imply, that the Calvinists disavow it either altogether, or else in a sense which his Lordship disapproves,—otherwise why should it be urged against them? It is, however, incumbent upon me to assure him and the public, that modern Calvinists do not cashier from their system 'the 'exercise of reason and free-will.' They consider reason as the faculty which compares ideas, and the will as free in all its elections: they maintain that these faculties were first given and are still continued to man, in order to be exercised; that, when exercised aright, they answer the important end of promoting 'the '*impression* which the truths of the gospel make 'upon the minds of men;' and that in this respect the impression '*depends* upon the *manner* 'in which they attend to them.' What more than this would his Lordship require? If any thing, it must be, that the exercise of our own reason and free-will is the exclusive cause of a good impression of Gospel truths upon our minds. I say a *good* impression,—for though the truths of the gospel are always and uniformly good, the impressions made, through man's fault, are often bad. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of

* Refut. p. 14.

God."*—"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life."†

§ 6. That a good impression of divine truth on the human mind depends exclusively on the exercise of reason and free-will, we dare not concede. The parable, explained by our Lord himself, expressly declares that "an honest and good heart" constitutes an essential difference, where the impression is good and lasting. All the different kinds of hearers had the exercise of reason and free-will, and all had equal objective inducements for exercising them in the same manner. We regard divine truth as the instrumental cause, or moral mean, of good impressions; but reason and free-will as physical powers, which are at liberty either to reject, or to receive and appropriate the truth proposed. To contend that reason and free-will are *themselves* the cause of the different manner of their exercise, is to argue in a circle. The question is, on what depends the proper exercise of reason and free-will? Surely not on the exercise of reason and free-will! We say, on the state of the heart, as "good and honest,"

* 1 Cor. i. 18. † 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

through the influence of the Holy Spirit. If the tree be thus made good, the fruit will be good; but if the tree be bad, it is certain the fruit will not be good. Thus good impressions require divine truth as the seal, reason and free-will as the hand, and honesty of heart as the soft wax. A dishonest and bad heart, like the hard wax, resists the seal. God vouchsafes to all men who hear the gospel, a proposal of divine truth, and physical powers,—judgment and reason, conscience and free-will; these in themselves are valuable gifts of heaven: but he is not under any *obligation* to soften the hard heart, or to alter the nature of man, which, of itself, ever since the first apostacy, "inclineth to evil." This deserves further explanation.

§ 7. It is manifest that God *can* take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh, for he has declared that he *will* do it: nor is it consistent with worthy thoughts of God, or with becoming reverence, to say that he can not do it, in reference to any of the human race, however depraved. Yet, if he were under obligation, in justice to his creatures, or if it any way became him to effect this, we are sure it would be done; for he cannot be unjust to his creatures, nor omit any thing which it becomes him to do. Consequently, when any heart is left unchanged, God does not omit what

becomes him, and all the blame attaches to the unbelieving and impenitent sinner. And in those instances wherein the heart is made susceptible of good impressions, through the intervention of truth and free-will, we acknowledge the operation of discriminating grace. For if the obligation is not of justice, there is no other alternative.

§ 8. His Lordship further avows, that *conversion* is owing to the exercise of our natural powers. His words are these: 'The inhabitants 'of Samaria, by giving heed to the preaching 'of Philip, and by seeing the miracles he per-'formed, believed the things which he spake 'concerning the kingdom of God, and the name 'of Jesus Christ, and were baptized both men 'and women. The *conversion* therefore of these 'persons also was owing to the exercise of 'their own *natural powers*.'* Far be it from Calvinists to discard the use of divinely instituted means, especially attention to preaching, and a believing regard to the testimony of God in his word. They are in the habit of inculcating these duties; and many, both men and women, are converted in the use of them to the faith of Jesus, and to the love of God. But we dare not say, that such conversions, or that of the

* Refut. p. 23.

Samaritans, should be ascribed exclusively to the exercise of natural powers. If his Lordship includes the grace of God as an essential cause of that conversion, disposing men to exercise these powers aright, we have the pleasure of agreeing with him.

§ 9. *Conversion*, in our view of it, denotes an actual turning from vice to real virtue; from every false refuge to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth in him with the heart; from an inordinate love of self and of the world to the love of God; and from the practice of sin, whether open or secret, to the exercise of divinely prescribed duties and all holy obedience. In this representation, I presume, his Lordship acquiesces. Now, the question is, whence originates so great a change both inward and outward?—to what is it owing? Can it satisfy any serious and reflecting enquirer, to be told, that the change in converted persons 'was 'owing to the exercise of their own natural 'powers?' Do not the disobedient exercise their own natural powers? Yes; but the sincere converts, it may be said, exercise them in a different manner. Granted; but the enquirer has a right to ask, *why* they do so? For this is the very point in question; and he is entitled to expect a better answer, than, They do it,

because they do it. Our answer is,—and let the reader judge whether it be not conformable to scripture and the principles of sound reason,—the happy change is owing to the special grace of God in the hearts of true converts, disposing them to exercise their natural powers in a proper manner. I said, *special* grace; because that which is displayed in the gospel objectively, which bringeth the tidings of salvation through Christ, has appeared to all men,—is alike common to the converted and unconverted, to numbers who perish, as well as to them who are eventually saved. Consequently that grace which causes the difference of result, must be subjective, or internal, and special.

SECT. III.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on DIVINE OPERATIONS, *examined.*

§ 1. The subject stated.

§ 2. The Bishop's declaration respecting the *manner* of co-operation, examined. § 3. Divine operation does not infringe on human freedom. § 4. Is not merely in the way of suasion. § 5. Is internal. § 6. Not immediately on the will, but the heart. § 7. With a design to beget a virtuous principle. § 8. Which is illuminating, and § 9. Antecedent to man's co-operation.

§ 10. That the communication of the Spirit is *subsequent* to belief, examined. § 11. Different kinds of influence—common, and § 12. Extraordinary; this preceded by faith. § 13. Faith distinguished as to its principle, and exercise. § 14. Extraordinary influence not communicated to any who refused to believe.

§ 15. That divine influence is communicated *by Baptism*, examined. § 16. This not the office of Baptism. § 17. But to represent. § 18—24. Divine influence and Baptism not inseparably associated.

§ 25. If grace were irresistible, men *could not* fall into sin, examined. § 26. In what sense grace is irresistible. § 27. In what sense good men can fall into sin, and also cannot.

§ 28. That irresistible grace cannot be employed as an *argument* for private care and diligence, examined. § 29. Its fallacy shewn from analogy.

§ 1. As his Lordship does not hesitate to acknowledge, in general, the doctrine of divine influence on the human mind, it is not necessary here to enter into a professed vindication of it: and it is no small pleasure to me, that he so openly avows, and so ably defends, in his Christian Theology, many important points of

revealed doctrine, which he holds in common with the Calvinists; especially the doctrine of the sacred Trinity in Unity, as well as that of atonement for sin by the substitution of Jesus Christ. Some things, however, he advances, respecting divine operations, which appear to me highly exceptionable. While he frankly acknowledges, that the *manner* of divine co-operation is unknown to him, which is a sufficient apology why he does not attempt to explain it, he yet contends that the communication of the Holy Ghost is subsequent to belief, indiscriminately—that Baptism imparts the Holy Ghost—that if divine influence were irresistible, men could not fall into sin—and that the doctrine of irresistible grace cannot be employed as an argument for private care and diligence. On these points let us attend to his own declarations.

§ 2. Though it might be thought presumptuous in me, to pretend to instruct his Lordship on a point which, he explicitly avows, is unknown to him; yet a few observations, for the sake of the general reader, may be hazarded, perhaps, without offence. The declaration I refer to is this: ‘ in what manner, or in what ‘ proportion, if I may so say, God and man

* Refut. p. 26.

'co-operate, I am utterly unable to explain or 'discover.'*—I do not indeed hesitate to add, with Bishop BULL, "Modum quidem concursus gratiæ divinæ cum humana voluntate exacte definire, ac dicere quid sola præstet gratia, quid cum et sub gratiâ liberum agat arbitrium, non *exiguæ difficultatis* res est."† But there is an important difference between a subject being attended with considerable difficulty, in our attempts at accurately defining and describing it, and its being utterly unknown. Whatever difficulties belong to the manner and proportion of the co-operation of God and man, there are some considerations which tend considerably to lessen them.

§ 3. We may be certain that the freedom of the human will is not infringed by the divine operation: since to infringe the freedom of a moral agent, is to diminish his accountability, in the same proportion, his freedom being the very foundation on which his accountability depends. The reality of divine operation on some human minds, and the certainty of a future account of our actions, whether good or evil, are fundamental and acknowledged truths. Consequently the operation does not infringe our freedom.

* BULL Harm. Apost. Dissert. Post.

§ 4. We may further be certain that the operation is not merely external, in the way of suasion, but internal. We have a distinct idea of moral means, external testimonies and proclamations, proofs and persuasive considerations, addresses to the fancy and the passions; and it is easy to conceive how such things operate on the mind, according to its previous disposition and preparatory state. We know, as a matter of fact, that the most solemn divine testimonies, the most awful proclamations of wrath and mercy, the most conclusive proofs, the most persuasive considerations, the most affecting addresses, the most lively descriptions, and the most powerful appeals to the passions, not only fail to engage many minds to love God and to obey him from the heart, but often become the innocent occasion of growing aversion to God and holiness. The discourses and miracles of our Saviour before the Pharisees and rulers, is a case in point. The very same things excited the love of some, and the hatred of others. And this the apostles, and subsequent preachers of the gospel ever since, have had abundant cause to notice,—and the parable of the sower illustrates it. If moral suasion were of itself sufficient, addressed to the reason and free-will of men, none of our Saviour's hearers would have remained unconverted. But

the rejectors of him and his gospel wanted a good and honest heart.

§ 5. We must therefore conclude, that the operation which renders the means effectual to salvation, is internal, or in the person himself. The word of God is in itself perfect, and needs no operation to make it more excellent: consequently it is not *in*, nor, strictly speaking, *with* the word, in order to make it different from what it always was. It must then be a physical operation as contradistinguished from what is moral. Let not the reader be alarmed at the term *physical* operation; for we do by no means intend by it what some have been pleased to suggest. The term is used by Calvinists—not to convey the idea of producing a superadded physical power, or natural faculty, but—to represent a positive and actual agency by the Holy Spirit, enabling the person to exercise the powers he had before, in a proper manner. It is not used as a contrast to spiritual or supernatural, but rather to any agency which may be supposed to exist in objects of choice presented to the mind. The latter are properly denominated *moral means*, because they act according to the will and disposition of the person.

§ 6. Hence, the immediate object of the

Spirit's operation is not the will, but the heart, as the source of moral actions. A physical, or positive influence on the will itself directly, would in the same degree destroy its freedom; whereas a direct influence on the heart leaves the freedom unimpaired. The will can only be *solicited* by objective means, or *indirectly* influenced by an inward principle. And in every virtuous choice there must be both a virtuous principle and a worthy object of choice presented to the mind,—and each is equally essential. A worthy object presented where the principle is bad, will never generate a virtuous choice; and a worthy principle where the object is unworthy, is equally barren and ineffectual. If it be said that an unworthy object may be rejected, as well as a worthy one chosen, and each virtuous; it is answered, that such a rejection is virtuous only in a negative sense. Where the virtue is positive there is always implied a more worthy object preferred, in comparison of it. To reject idols or falsehood is but a negative virtue; but to prefer God to idols, or truth to falsehood, where that preference is sincere and cordial, is positive virtue.

§ 7. The end of divine operations must be to produce a virtuous principle, or in the language of the prophet, to " take away the heart

of stone, and to give a heart of flesh." Free-will, under the direction of this principle, or as far as the principle exists, ever chooses virtuously. It never disapproves of gospel truth fairly presented to it; but, on the contrary, receives and lives upon it. It is possible, indeed, that a person possessed of a holy principle may be embarrassed, with respect to some very important parts of gospel truth, through the defect of language, or his misconception of terms, or the prejudices of education or of party,—in a word, through some defect of representation: but let that defect be removed, the person still retaining the virtuous principle, and no essential part of holy truth will be rejected. He cannot thus commit sin, "for his seed remaineth in him." His co-operation by free-will with the revealed will of God, will be in exact proportion to the clearness with which he perceives it, and the godly sincerity of his principle.—To suppose that free-will, while the disposition is good, receives not the blessings fairly represented to it in the gospel of the grace of God, and in the same proportion, is as unreasonable, as to suppose that a thing acts contrary to its own proper nature.

§ 8. We may further observe, that the principle generated by divine operation illu-

minates the mind; enabling it to discover the spiritual nature and superior excellency of the truths revealed in the sacred oracles, — to know what is the hope of our calling, and what are the riches of our glorious inheritance. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts, whereby we discover the glories of the divine perfections as displayed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Whereas to the unprincipled the light of revealed truth shines without effect; their darkness comprehendeth it not; their understanding continues dark, "being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness (or hardness) of their heart." While the heart is hard, the understanding will be blind, to the same degree, notwithstanding the outward light of truth in the scriptures. Hence the ablest expositors and preachers have cause to pray that God may prepare the hearts of their readers and hearers, that they may earnestly attend to, that they may understand, that they may "mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the truths represented.

§ 9. From the premises we learn, that the co-operation of man is subsequent to the operation of God,—and that man co-operates freely, willingly, and cordially; the holy principle

generated disposing the subject of it to admire, love, and prefer what is really and relatively excellent. We also learn, that the subject of divine operation, in his religious elections, acts not only from principle but also intelligently. He knows in whom he believes, and whom he serves, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. He discovers the evil of sin and the beauty of holiness—he is wise unto salvation—he chooses an end worthy of God to reveal, and adopts the means prescribed for obtaining it—in *proportion* to the principle produced by divine operation. These are truths which cannot be denied, I conceive, without denying that principles operate according to their appropriate nature,—and confounding free-will with unmeaning chance.

§ 10. His Lordship next avows, that the communication of the Holy Ghost is *subsequent* to belief. 'In the following passage,' he observes, 'Saint Paul represents the faith of 'the Ephesians in Christ to have been the 'consequence of their having heard the gospel 'preached, and the communication of the Holy 'Ghost to have been subsequent to their faith, "In whom (namely in Christ) ye also *trusted*, '*after* that ye heard the word of truth, the 'gospel of your salvation; in whom also, *after* 'that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy

'Spirit of promise:" The order to be here 'noticed is this,—first, the hearing of the word; 'secondly, belief produced by that; thirdly, 'the communication of the Spirit in conse-'quence of that belief. From these examples, 'which comprehend Jewish, Samaritan, and 'Gentile converts, we conclude in general, that 'those to whom the apostles preached, ex-'pressed their faith in Christ, *before* the Holy 'Ghost was poured out upon them; and that 'the Spirit was *never* communicated to those 'who *refused* to believe.'*

§ 11. In the passage now quoted there are several objectionable particulars, especially if it be intended to weigh against Calvinism. For, in the first place, it takes for granted what neither is, nor can be proved, viz. That there is but *one kind* of communication of the Holy Spirit. Now, it is plain that in the Old Testament times holy persons were the subjects of divine influence, in a manner altogether different from the communication of the Holy Ghost to which his Lordship alludes. Is it supposable that from the beginning of time to the present, there have been any holy persons, who were not the subjects of divine operation,—and yet how few of these were the subjects of extraordinary

* Refut. p. 21.

communications and miraculous gifts? Was not Peter the subject of holy influence and an enlightening principle, before he had any visibly miraculous communication of the Holy Ghost?* Had not all the faithful apostles of Christ a sanctifying operation of the Spirit before the day of Pentecost? Do not men now pray, that God would "cleanse the thoughts and desires of their hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit?" In short, few things are more plain, relating to divine operations, than the existence of both a merely internal, and a miraculous operation of the Spirit. And their design is evidently different;—the one being to promote religion and salvation in the individual who is the subject of it, the other to propagate Christianity in the world, during the minority of the Christian church.

§ 12. In the next place, from the unproved assumption now mentioned, his Lordship draws this general conclusion, 'That those to whom 'the apostles preached, expressed their faith in 'Christ, *before* the Holy Ghost was poured out 'upon them.' The question however ought to be, in order to disprove the doctrine of Calvinists,—not, whether faith preceded the extraordinary and miraculous effusion of the Spirit, but

* Matt. xvi. 17.

whether saving faith is prior to his internal, ordinary, and enlightening influence. That those to whom the apostles preached expressed their faith in Christ, before they received the one, is no conclusive argument that they were not the subjects of the other operation *prior* to the expression of their faith. What is recorded of Lydia is a case in point. It is expressly said, that "the Lord opened her heart," as the predisposing cause of her attention and faith.

§ 13. The statement made in the quotation, it may be further observed, confounds the exercise of faith with its principle. No Calvinist denies, that the hearing of the word precedes the exercise of faith; for we constantly maintain that belief is produced by hearing, or, as the apostle expresses it, that "faith cometh by hearing. and hearing by the word of God." There can be no belief without a testimony; but surely the thing believed can no more produce the principle or spirit of faith, than the act of reasoning can produce the reasoning faculty, or the act of volition produce the will. We are neither so unscriptural nor unreasonable as to suppose, that believing, trusting, or sealing, are not preceded by hearing: we set forth the testimony of God before our hearers, in order that they may believe and trust in it, and that they may be sealed with the Holy Spirit of

promise as the consequent privilege: but we should offend against scripture and reason, were we to profess that the principle of faith, any more than the testimony believed, is "of ourselves," as the production of free-will.

§ 14. Equally inapplicable to Calvinists is the intimation, that they (for who else can be intended by his Lordship?) pretend that the Spirit is sometimes communicated to those who *refuse* to believe. We freely grant, and openly profess, that the communication of the Spirit in an extraordinary manner for the first propagation of Christianity, was *subsequent* to belief, and consequently 'was never communicated to those who refused to believe,'—and we are as ready to deny that any person is the subject of divine influence, and at the same time *refuses* to believe. But to suppose a person prior to such influence refused to believe, and believed in consequence of it, is neither inconsistent with scripture nor with reason. Few will deny, that Saul of Tarsus became the subject of divine operation, when previously he had refused to believe; for he was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," at the very time he was arrested by divine power between Jerusalem and Damascus. But no sooner did he experience that heavenly power, than his enmity against the Saviour and

his disciples was subdued, and 'he refused to believe' no longer: for to imagine that he first believed, without receiving the spirit of faith, but that this was imparted to him as the consequence of believing, is at variance with all analogy. But the insufficiency of reason and free-will to make the heart good, or to beget a spiritual principle of saving faith, has been already considered.

§ 15. It is very explicitly avowed by his Lordship, that *baptism washes away sin, and imparts the Holy Ghost.* 'The rite of 'baptism,' he observes, 'was ordained by Christ 'himself; and its two-fold office is here [Acts 'ii. 38.] described by his apostle, namely, that 'it *washes away* the guilt of former *sin*, and '*imparts the Holy Ghost* to those who shall '*previously* have repented and believed. It had 'been foretold by John the Baptist, that Christ 'should baptize with the Holy Ghost, meaning, 'that the *baptism* instituted by Christ, and 'administered by his apostles and their suc-'cessors, *should convey* the supernatural assist-'ance of the Spirit of God. This communica-'tion being made at baptism, at the time of 'admission into the gospel covenant, every 'Christian must possess the invaluable blessing 'of preventing grace, which, without extin-'guishing the evil propensities of our nature,

'inspires holy desires, suggests good counsels, 'and excites to just works.'* As to the quotation from Dr. BARROW, which asserts that this "hath been the doctrine constantly, and with very general consent, delivered in the Catholic church," it proves one thing at least,—that the Catholic church has never been so pure but it needed reformation; needed it, in proportion as the sentiment here maintained is inconsistent with the genuine sense of the sacred scriptures, and the reasonableness of Christianity. And whether this be not the fact, let us now proceed calmly and impartially to examine.

§ 16. That the rite of baptism was ordained by Christ himself is admitted on all sides; but that its two-fold office is to *wash away the guilt of sin*, and to *impart the Holy Ghost*, according to Peter, or any other inspired writer, wants proof. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."† Here the first question is, with what remission of sin stands connected? With repentance, with baptism, or with both united? Let Peter himself answer: "Repent ye therefore and be con-

* Refut. p. 29. † Acts ii. 38.

verted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come, &c."* We know from scripture testimony that the penitent shall be pardoned, though unbaptized; and we know too that every baptized person was not pardoned, as in the case of Simon Magus. Consequently, the union of repentance and baptism was not an indispensable condition for the remission of sin. It is therefore plain, that as baptism was not, either alone or united with repentance, inseparably connected, even in the apostolic age, with the remission of sin, it was not one office of baptism to "wash away the guilt of former sins." Peter's expression must mean, to make it consistent with other scriptures, "Repent—for the remission of sins, be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ;" so that baptism is urged as a suitable mode of testifying their repentance, because an instituted rite of entering into a new visible relation to Jesus Christ, the true Messiah.

§ 17. Baptism, being "an outward, visible sign, of an inward spiritual grace," *represents* the washing away of sin; but it is not the *sign* that effects it, though by a common figure of speech it is put for that which does so in reality.

* Acts iii. 19.

Thus David figuratively ascribes to the sign what evidently belongs to the thing signified. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean."* What really takes away the guilt of past sins, is the merit of Christ's obedience unto death in our stead, and which, according to the plan of divine mercy in the gospel, we are encouraged to receive by faith for that end. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."† "If the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ—purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"‡ Hence we may see, that to ascribe to baptism the washing away of guilt is to confound the sign with the thing signified.

§ 18. Nor can it be consistently maintained, that the thing signified is, in its application, *inseparably associated* with baptism. That it may please God, in some instances, to apply the blessing *at* the ministration of the ordinance is not disputed; because he may do it then as well as at any other time: but that he has laid himself under the obligation of a promise to do so, does not appear from his word,—and plain

*Psa. li. 7. † 1 John i. 7. ‡ Heb. ix. 13, 14.

facts recorded there, as before shewn, prove the contrary. The same may be said of *imparting the Holy Ghost;* for this plain reason, that there appears no greater connection between baptism and the giving of the Spirit, than between baptism and the remission of sin. It is allowed, as before concerning the remission of sin, that God may give his spirit to the baptized person at the time of ministration, because he is confined to no time; and it is proper to *pray* for the blessing on that occasion, not only because we may ask it of our Father in heaven at all times, as children may ask a gift of their earthly parents, but also because the use of the *sign* is calculated to remind us of our need, and to excite our desires after the blessing represented.

§ 19. The same remark is applicable to the ancient custom of "laying hands" on the head of a person in some peculiarly act of solemn prayer. It is an outward sign whereby the subject is affectionately discriminated from others, and in the use of which blessings have been sought. Hence the employment of it is calculated not only to bring to remembrance God's promised blessing of his Holy Spirit, but also to increase our importunity. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon many in the Christian church *long after* their

baptism,—as is evident from the following passage; "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."* Here, not baptism but the imposition of hands was the outward sign; not *at* the time of baptism, but at some future period. Had the Holy Ghost been imparted by baptism, as a matter of course, Simon would not have been destitute of the heavenly gift.

§ 20. But his Lordship supposes, that it is the office of baptism to impart the Holy Ghost to those who shall '*previously have repented and* '*believed.*' Here we might ask, did any ever believe and repent without the influence of the Holy Ghost? Is not the spirit of faith and

* Acts viii. 14—19.

repentance a heavenly gift? Do not all true penitents and believers readily ascribe this to the Father of lights, and the exalted Lord and Saviour? Does not supplication to God for the spirit of love, of repentance and faith, for unbaptized persons imply the same? Is not this communication of the Holy Spirit's influence different from his miraculous effusion, designed for different purposes, and attended with different effects? and was not that which was extraordinary given in a manner, and at different intervals of time, sufficient to prove that it was not the *office* of baptism to impart it? It is well worthy of consideration, whether to pray for the *same kind* of operation now, as what followed the apostolic laying on of hands, be not as much chargeable with presumption and enthusiasm, as to pray for the gift of tongues, or for power to raise the dead.

§ 21. His Lordship, when explaining the meaning of John the Baptist, asserts, that baptism administered by the apostles and their successors, 'should convey the *supernatural* 'assistance of the Spirit of God.' If this, however, was the only use of baptism, it ought to have been discontinued from the time of the apostles, or at least of their immediate successors, when similar effects no longer followed. How much more worthy of the sacred oracles is the

other interpretation, viz. That the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was *itself* a kind of baptism, an initiation into the mysteries of Christ's spiritual reign, rather than a mystical effect of water baptism? That the word baptism was sometimes used figuratively by Christ and his apostles, as well as by John the Baptist, is evident. When our Lord was about to be initiated into his last sufferings, he says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?"*—"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?—Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with."† Here evidently the "cup" denotes deep sorrow; and "baptism" a being devoted to, set apart for, or initiated into that state in which he exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."‡ St. Paul says, that the Israelites were *baptized* into Moses, when he clearly means initiated into his dispensation: and Saint Peter calls a sincere confession of the Christian faith baptism. Noah and his family, by entering into the ark, were initiated into a new dispensation, and persons entering into the Christian church professed the same; and when their answer

* Luke xii. 5. † Matt. xx. 22, 23. ‡ Ib. xxvi. 38.

proceeded from "a good conscience," purified by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, it was connected with salvation:* the apostle expressly declares that by baptism he meant, "The answer of a good conscience towards God." If, therefore, the word was thus used figuratively by Christ and his apostles, why must John the Baptist, as above quoted, speaking of Christ *baptizing* with the Holy Ghost, be debarred from the figurative use of it; especially when the literal sense, expressing water baptism, is encumbered with so many and such insuperable difficulties.

§ 22. It must be allowed by every well-informed and dispassionate person, that many who have succeeded the apostles officially, were contemptible moral characters. Be that as it may, to suppose that a penitent believer has not the Spirit of God imparted to him *until* he has been *baptized*, but has this blessing *after*, if but administered in due form by a successor of the apostles, (even though resembling Simon Magus in the temper of his mind,) is the direct way to a contempt of the religion that professes it, and to promote the cause of infidelity. That the unworthiness of the minister does not disannul the real design of a divinely instituted

* 1 Pet. iii. 22.

ordinance, is fully admitted. The objection lies against the pretended design or office of baptism. Baptism itself, however unworthy the minister, we maintain, exhibits, in a very significant manner, our need of moral purity,—the mercy of God by Jesus Christ in making provision for it according to the gospel,—and our obligations to renounce every thing inconsistent with Christianity. The notion of a divinely instituted rite conferring grace *ex opere operato*, or as a condition *sine qua non*, or by any appointed *inseparable connection* of the sign and the thing signified, ought to be buried in oblivion, with other Jewish and Popish prejudices, lest the holy ordinances of God be exposed to contempt. If we would defend the gospel against unbelievers, or confirm the faith of Christians, let us not insult their understanding; but shew that its doctrines and institutions are not unreasonable, however inadequate the principles of reason were to discover them *a priori*.

§ 23. 'Every Christian must possess the 'invaluable blessing of preventing grace.' This we cannot allow, unless by 'Christian' be meant, one who bears the moral image of Christ, as distinguished from one who is merely baptized. To suppose that the communication of the invaluable blessing of grace is made 'at

'baptism, at the time of admission into the gospel 'covenant,' as a matter of course, in virtue of some appointed rule of operation, is not less unscriptural, than the sentiment, that the institution of confirmation communicates confirming grace, or the divine ordinance of marriage conveys the grace of a spiritual union to him who is the head and husband of his church. In short, the sentiment mixes heaven and earth, and confounds physical and moral connections. That God *may* communicate grace *at* baptism, was before admitted: but that this or any other institution can impart, convey, or communicate grace, or is adapted in its nature to be the channel of conveyance, is an idea perfectly incongruous and irreconcileable with just views of divine operations, and of sacred rites. By baptism, indeed, we are brought into a new visible relation; and in an external sense may be said to be made or constituted "children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." But we cannot suppose this new relation to be an inward change, or an introduction into a saving relation to God, and Christ, and heaven, without in effect supposing that a baptized hypocrite is a good Christian; that a man under the prevailing influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil, if baptized, is a spiritual child of God; that a baptized person, though full of the lust of the flesh, the

lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is a worthy member of Christ, and in the way to heaven! Neither baptism, the Lord's Supper, nor any other ordinance can become inwardly profitable to the subject, except according to the proper use he makes of it. This, I am aware, some *may* controvert; for there are some who *do* call in question the first principles of knowledge, and the proper nature of things, as well as the verities of holy writ.

§ 24. Until it be made apparent that baptismal internal grace has an existence, little need be said about its supposed properties. It cannot be doubted that subjective internal holy influence is the source of holy desires, good counsels, and just works; but to affirm that it inspires, suggests, and excites them, seems to be an employment of figurative language calculated to mislead the judgment, and therefore misplaced. However, we are told that this preventing grace does not 'extinguish 'the evil propensities of our nature.' But surely the *tendency* of all divine grace, is to extinguish the fire of sinful lusts, and to counteract evil propensities; and a person in whom no degree of flagrant evil is extinguished, though baptized, has no degree of holy grace. For if to extinguish and counteract evil be not an effect, by what medium can its existence be proved?

If his Lordship means that there is a degree of holy influence which does not imply a perfection of character, or that persons may be found who were not made perfect at baptism, all modern Calvinists, be it remembered, are of the same opinion.

§ 25. 'If grace were irresistible,' his Lordship asserts, 'men *could not* depart from it, 'and fall into sin.'* In this hypothetical proposition we may notice the ambiguity of the terms 'grace' and 'irresistible.' The Calvinists do not maintain that grace, in every acceptation of the word, is irresistible. A little reflection may satisfy any candid person, that in scripture usage it conveys different ideas, according to the connection; and especially these three—exhibited favour, an internal principle of spiritual light and life, and Christian virtues in exercise. Fact proves, that exhibited favours, as gospel truth, Christ, and salvation, are actually resisted; and therefore grace in this acceptation (which is common in scripture) is not irresistible. And fact further proves, that Christian virtues, as faith, hope, and charity, are resisted by our depraved propensities, at least in some degree. When, therefore, Calvinists maintain that grace is irresistible, they mean an

* Refut. p. 63.

internal principle of light and life. And the reason why they think so is, that it is not an object exhibited or presented to the *will*. When there is no option, there can be no voluntary rejection. Thus the principle of reason is irresistible in every subject of it, though its proper use, and those things which are adapted to improve it, are often resisted. In like manner, though the principle of divine grace is irresistible, those things are often resisted, which in their own nature are adapted to promote gracious determinations, affections, and obedience.

§ 26. Yet, there is a sense in which we believe that grace, as to its use and exercise, is irresistible by any thing without or within the mind. In what cases, and to what degree, must depend on the sovereign will of God. If God *design* (and who can question his right to design?) that his internal grace shall not be resisted, is it not in that degree irresistible? When Calvinists plead for the irresistibility of grace, they take two things into account: First, the nature of that grace which they intend;—not the common favour contained in the annunciation of gospel blessings, or in the exhibition of mercy by any divine institution, but the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit producing a new heart, or a right principle of action.

Secondly, they take into the account the will of God, supporting and strengthening the principle, making it victorious over every difficulty. To plead that common favour—the grace of God that bringeth salvation, the proclamation of mercy which is destined for all men—is resistible, or to set the will of God—his efficacious purpose respecting the vital holy principle—out of the question, is to plead without a cause, and to contend without an opposer. What can be plainer in fact, or more reasonable in thought, than that God imparts his favours when, where, how, to whom, and to what degree he pleases? And if he determine that any possessed of a gracious principle shall continue to the end victorious over every resistance, who will be so presumptuous as to say, that his grace in them can be successfully resisted? Is it not to limit his mercy and omnipotence?

§ 27. That good men *can* fall into sin is a painful fact; and it is equally certain that God is "able to keep them from falling"—"to keep them by his mighty power through faith unto salvation." Their liability to fall is of themselves, but their ability to stand is of God. While he "keeps them from falling," they cannot fall; but if left to themselves they both can and will fall. A deep sense of this dependence upon God, is the essence of true

devotion; and its language is, "Hold thou me up, O Lord, and I shall be safe;—without thee, divine Saviour, I can do nothing; but I can do all things if thou strengthen me." Were there no defect in our nature, or were that defect counteracted by confirming grace, there would be no falling into sin. But to contend, that he *ought* to do this for us, either in justice or in mercy, is surely both impious and absurd: impious, as impeaching his actual conduct; for he does not keep any of his servants, while in this world, in a state of sinless perfection: "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not," and "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The requisition moreover is absurd: it manifestly implies that God ought to confer upon us all the favour he can confer,—that his favours are not at his own disposal,—that he ought to act to the extent of possibility in shewing mercy: and to say, that mercy, or grace, or any *favour* is *due* to the creature, is clearly a direct contradiction, both in meaning and in terms.

§ 28. It is further asserted by his Lordship, that irresistible grace cannot be employed as an *argument* for private care and diligence. His words are: 'God does not so work in us as 'to exclude our own care and industry; that

'is, he does not work irresistibly. For, sup-
'posing God to work irresistibly, the wit of
'man cannot make an *argument* out of it for
'private care and diligence."* Taking the words 'irresistible grace' in the sense before explained, and as Calvinists use them, the objection has no more force than the following, viz. 'supposing God to work irresistibly' in imparting to us the principle of reason, we 'cannot make an *argument* out of it for private 'care and diligence,' respecting the improvement and right use of it. Again, the succession of day and night, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, is uncontroulable by man, therefore he 'cannot make an *argument* out of it 'for private care and diligence,' to work while it is day, to provide in summer for the winter season, or to sow his seed that he may reap his harvest in due time. Or, because every seed, every plant, and every animal, has its own peculiar nature, and the principles of its nature are irresistibly wrought in it, we 'cannot make an *argument* out of it for private care and diligence,' by improving that nature and cherishing those principles.

§ 29. Surely, if the certainty and irresistibility of principles in physical nature, be no good argu-

* Refut. p. 37.

ment against the propriety of private care and diligence, or do not supersede our own industry, whether these principles be in ourselves or in others, some good reason should be assigned why the same is not applicable to gracious nature. Nay, if in physical nature the irresistibility of a principle, and the certainty of its continuance, is a strong argument *for* care and industry in its cultivation, we are entitled to ask, why the irresistibility of grace, in the sense explained, should not be an argument of equal force *for* fear and diligence, care and industry? What God requires, should be attended to with care and diligence; but he requires belief, love, fear, hope, and universal obedience. Now is it conceivable that the principle, from whence these required graces proceed, being the irresistible work of God, is inconsistent with such requisitions? We do not say, with the Remonstrants, that our *possessing* the principle is the *foundation* of the requirement, but that the possession of it is a corroborating argument for the exercise of these required graces and tempers. In a word, the irresistibility of a divine nature in its bestowment, is a strong argument for its careful, industrious, and diligent improvement.

Chap. II.

AVOWED SENTIMENTS OF THE BISHOP ON REGENERATION, JUSTIFICATION, FAITH, AND GOOD WORKS, EXAMINED.

Sect. I.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on Regeneration, examined.

§ 1. The subject stated.

§ 2. The word Regeneration as used by Calvinists. § 3. Admitted by them in different senses. § 4. They do not confound Regeneration and Conversion. § 5. Nor limit the time of either. § 6. Remarks on being "born of Water and of the Spirit."

§ 7. In what sense Baptism may be called a new birth. § 8. A spiritual change not an immediate effect of Baptism. § 9. The formation of Christian virtues and tempers may be called Regeneration. § 10. The Calvinists do not confound Regeneration with "indefectible grace."

§ 11—25. Passages out of the New Testament produced by the Bishop to prove that Regeneration signifies Baptism, examined. § 26. Christians have a double birth. § 27. Candidates for Baptism were *supposed* to be regenerated in the scriptural sense.

§ 28—31. The meaning of the term Regeneration, as used by the Christian Fathers, examined.

§ 1. Under this head, we find his Lordship explicitly avowing, and indeed contending, that regeneration is the immediate effect of baptism—and is never used in scripture or by the Fathers to express any operation upon the human mind subsequent to baptism. Thus he states his thoughts on the term itself and its meaning. 'As the term Regeneration, or New-

'birth, is frequently used by *modern Calvinists*, 'when speaking of their favourite tenets of in-'stantaneous conversion and indefectible grace, 'it may be proper to explain the application 'and true meaning of this word in scripture, 'and in the public formularies of our church.— 'Those who are baptized are immediately trans-'lated from the curse of Adam to the grace of 'Christ.—They become reconciled to God, par-'takers of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of eternal 'happiness.—This great and wonderful change, 'in the condition of man is as it were a new 'nature, a new state of existence; and the holy 'rite by which these invaluable blessings are 'communicated is by St. Paul figuratively called "Regeneration," or New-birth. Many similar 'phrases occur in the New Testament, such 'as "*born* of Water and of the Spirit;" "*begotten* '*again* unto a lively hope;" "dead in sins, and '*quickened* together with Christ;" "*buried* with 'Christ in baptism;" "*born again*, not of cor-'ruptible seed, but of incorruptible."—"Baptism 'doth now save us, by the resurrection of 'Jesus Christ." "According to his mercy he 'saved us by the washing of regeneration, and 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "Except 'a man be *born again*, he cannot see the 'kingdom of God."* 'The word Regeneration

* Refut. p. 83.

'therefore is in scripture solely and exclusively 'applied to the one *immediate effect* of baptism 'once administered, and is never used as syno-'nymous to the repentance or reformation of a 'Christian, or to express any operation of the 'Holy Ghost upon the human mind *subsequent* 'to baptism.'* His Lordship also quotes the following passages with approbation: "The Christians did in all ancient times continue the use of this name for baptism; so as that they *never* use the word regenerate or born again, but that they mean or denote by it baptism."† "Regeneration in the language of the Fathers *constantly* signifies the participation of the sacrament of baptism."‡

§ 2. The 'modern Calvinists,' it is true, use the word "Regeneration," to express *something* different from baptism; but not what his Lordship ascribes to them—not 'instantaneous con-'version and indefectible grace.' The previous question here is, whether they are authorized to use this word, in different connections, with different acceptations, provided they give a definition of their meaning? Supposing, without granting, that the word in scripture usage *always*

* Refut. p. 86.

† Wall's Hist. of Inf. Bapt. Intr. Sect 6. Refut. p. 87.

‡ Nicholls on Com. Pray. Refut. p. 88.

denotes baptism, by what law are they deprived of the customary privilege of using any word, in any language, to denote a determinate meaning affixed to it, when that meaning is announced and stated? And if it be lawful thus to use a word differently from the inspired writers, (as is frequently allowed in other instances) much more is it lawful to deviate from the custom of ecclesiastical writers, whether ancient Fathers or English Reformers. This, however, is urged only for argument' sake.

§ 3. Modern Calvinists admit the term Regeneration in three acceptations, principally, according to the connection. First, as denoting, figuratively, baptism: secondly, the immediate effect of divine influence on the mind: thirdly, the formation of Christian tempers and graces. The Christian Fathers, and after them many of the Protestant Reformers—by a frequent figurative use of the term Regeneration for Baptism, the outward sign—have greatly contributed to confound both. At first, they no doubt thought that the figure was sufficiently plain, and that there was no danger of mistaking the one for the other. The thing signified being always more excellent than the sign, there is a propensity in the human mind to give the sign the more honourable appellation. Sometimes the thing signified is to be inferred, without any

determinate name distinct from the sign. In this case, there is an equal propensity to magnify the latter until the former is totally eclipsed. Thus the Jews made circumcision, as an outward rite, to be both the sign and thing signified; or, more properly speaking, the latter was absorbed in the former. And when Saint Paul contended that the thing signified might be enjoyed by the Gentiles without the sign, how violent was the opposition! The priests and the scribes, the rabbis and the common people, almost in a body, opposed him. Of the truth of this statement the apostle's letters to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Hebrews, are abundant evidence.

§ 4. We do not confound *regeneration* with *conversion;* for, by the former we understand an immediate effect of the operation of God the Holy Ghost in the mind; but by the latter the voluntary act of the mind in turning from all forbidden objects and pursuits to God and holiness by Jesus Christ, as the consequence of regeneration. The important change expressed by regeneration is the work of God, and *may* take place in an infant, but conversion, implying a voluntary act upon conviction, *cannot* take place in an infant mind. Regeneration *may* also take place *at* baptism, or *before,* or *after* baptism; but were we to say that it *must* be at or by

that ordinance, we ought to stand reproved as guilty of enthusiasm, as being wise above what is written in the sacred oracles. Conversion also, in our view, *may* take place, before, or after, or at baptism; but *cannot* take place without regeneration, any more than voluntary motion can be exerted without a vital principle. Regeneration, as the immediate effect of divine influence, we maintain is instantaneous;—and so, indeed, does his Lordship; it being, according to him, 'the one *immediate effect* of baptism once 'administered;' nay, so immediate, so instantaneous, that it is never '*subsequent* to baptism!'

§ 5. To limit either regeneration or conversion to any period of human life, or as the effect of any external rite, while the will of God is sovereign in dispensing blessings, and the will of man is free from constraint, we regard as enthusiastic. An opinion which appears *a priori* so very improbable, so inconsistent with the analogy of divine dispensations; which makes a physical act, as water-baptism is, to be a certain medium of a spiritual effect, while the subject is entirely passive; ought, we to conceive, before it can be exonerated from this charge, to have no dubious evidence of divine authority. We study the scriptures, as well as our opponents, and conclude that they contain no such evidence. His Lordship, however, has produced several

passages in support of the contrary opinion. Let us now candidly examine them.

§ 6. "Born of Water and of the Spirit." There was a dispute among the Jews about purifying, occasioned, it should seem, by the baptism of John and that of Christ's disciples.* Now it seems natural to suppose, that they regarded the terms "baptizing," and "purifying," as synonymous;—and indeed what more properly expresses the nature of baptism than a ceremonial purification? The "washing of water by the word," constitutes the ceremonial institution; and the signification is the removal of moral impurity. The Jews hastily inferred, (and Nicodemus was not free from the prejudice,) that baptism itself was enough to constitute a complete disciple. But our Lord shews them their mistake, by stating, that saving discipleship includes a heavenly and spiritual, as well as a watery birth. Hence, to be baptized is to be "born of water;" which introduces the subject of it into a visible relation to the Messiah, as circumcision introduced its subject into the privileges and obligations of the preceding dispensation; and to be spiritually regenerated is to be "born of the Spirit," without which no one can be a spiritual subject of Christ's kingdom,

* John iii. 22—26.

or be rendered meet for heaven. For that which is spiritual must be born of the Spirit; as that which is flesh must be born of the flesh, or as that which is natural must arise from the constituted laws of nature. Can any thing, therefore, be plainer than these words to shew, first, that to be "born of water" is to be baptized, by which we enter on a new state of relative existence, or enjoyment of external privileges, and consequently of corresponding obligations: secondly, that to be "born of the Spirit" is an effect of some operation of the Spirit of God in the mind, distinct from and superior to the baptismal rite: thirdly, that those who regard the immediate effect of this operation of the Spirit of God in the mind as regeneration, are conformable to scripture in the use of the term.

§ 7. We freely admit that to be "born of water" is, in an inferior sense, to be "born again," when contrasted with our "natural birth:" for as by the latter we are introduced into a new state of existence, so by the former, in a figurative sense, we are brought into a new state of things,—into new relations to Christ and his church, new privileges and obligations, new associates and services. In a word, by being "born of water" we become externally and visibly related to the Christian dispensation, as

a man by being circumcised became related to the Jewish church. But to infer that an external rite, however significant, introduces the subject of it into a spiritual and saving relation to God, was an error into which the Jews had very generally fallen, and from which many professing Christians are not free. "For he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."* Here it is quite clear that circumcision was a rite by which a change "of the heart," a change "in the spirit," was the thing signified; and, that persons being circumcised in the flesh was no proof of their being circumcised in the spirit. And from the analogy of divine dispensations we may conclusively argue (mutatis mutandis) with the apostle: he is not a Christian who is one outwardly; neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly; and baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.

§ 8. Let the candid reader now judge whether

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

we have any room to infer that a spiritual change is an immediate effect of an external rite; either of circumcision, of baptism, or, by parity of reason, of any other. As to the words first noticed, "born of water" and "born of the Spirit," (for the word *born* is evidently implied in the latter clause), there is no intimation, either in the words themselves or in the connection, that the one birth is the immediate effect of the other, any more than being born again of water is the immediate effect of being born of the flesh. A mere nominal Christian, is born of the flesh and of water; but if changed in heart and spirit, he is also born of the Spirit. And, if I may express my own conviction, every attempt to shew that being "born of the Spirit," "born from above," "born of God," and the like, denote either baptism itself, or some immediate effect of baptism, has a direct tendency to expose the simple but sublime religion of Jesus Christ to the derision of its enemies; — and ought to be as strenuously exploded, as the unscriptural and unintelligible dogmas of transubstantiation and consubstantiation.

§ 9. It has been observed before, that the modern Calvinists use the term Regeneration as denoting sometimes the *formation* of Christian virtues and tempers; which acceptation also

they deduce from scripture usage.* In order to form that "new man" which consists in knowledge, faith, hope, and love, humility, meekness, patience, and all holy tempers exercised by true Christians—the word and ordinances of God, as well as his Holy Spirit, are necessary. But these means are not like mechanical instruments, producing an effect on the human mind irrespective of its own choice; since it is a plain fact, that means identically the same, produce effects directly opposite. Properly speaking, the means are objects proposed to the view of the mind, and occasions afforded to excite and draw forth into exercise the divine life. And thus baptism *may* be (but not without the voluntary concurrence of the subject) the means of this regeneration; because it may be the occasion of forming knowledge, faith, charity, &c. in a mind born of the Spirit. But then, on the same ground, this kind of regeneration may also immediately succeed the use of the Lord's Supper, preaching, reading, or any other means of grace.

§ 10. The Calvinists do not confound Regeneration, in any sense of the term, with 'indefectible grace.' If at any time they use the word 'indefectible' as a property of grace, they

* Col. iii. 10.

distinguish between the act of generating grace as a principle of life, and its continuance without defection, by divine support.—It is time, however, to advert to some other passages, adduced by his Lordship to prove that *regeneration means baptism*—'a single act performed upon 'every individual.'

§ 11. "Begotten again unto a lively hope."* These words of Saint Peter, according to his Lordship, *relate to baptism.* Why he should think so, it is difficult to say; since there appears nothing either in the words themselves or in the context to support that conclusion. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath *begotten us again unto a lively hope*, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."† In scripture, the word Hope is used to express either an exercise of mind in reference to some future good promised, or the object itself which is hoped for, or the ground on which that hope rests; and, if I mistake not, in every place where the word

* 1 Pet. i. 3. † Ver. 2—5.

is used, it may be naturally referred to some one of these acceptations. The words of Peter, however, "lively hope," seem very clearly to express an *exercise of mind*, without a figure. For the epithet "lively" is inapplicable to any other; and the *ground* of hope immediately follows, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Then is expressed immediately the *object* of hope, "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, &c." And he who had "begotten them again," or regenerated them, to this lively hope, was God. In short, Saint Peter blesses God for preparing an inheritance in heaven for such Christians as are kept by his power through faith unto salvation; and for revealing to them the foundation on which they may confidently rest their expectation of it, the resurrection of Christ; and finally, according to the order of end and means, that he had regenerated them to a lively expectation of obtaining the inheritance.

§ 12. Regeneration, the immediate effect of which was "a lively hope," was from "the *abundant mercy* of God" principally in three respects. In the first place mercy prepared the blessing hoped for; secondly, mercy afforded the pledge, which is contained in the gospel; and, thirdly, mercy bestowed the principle which is begotten in the heart. And in each of these respects it

is "abundant." The blessing is of inestimable worth; an inheritance, a kingdom, an eternal weight of glory. The pledge is inconceivably precious, the son of God in his humiliation and exaltation, accompanied with the ordinances, the promises, and the oath of that God who cannot lie. And the principle is abundantly efficacious, when the mind contemplates the blessings and the pledge, the object and the foundation, to beget in it a lively, vigorous hope, that maketh not ashamed; unto which hope the soul is thus regenerated.

§ 13. According to his Lordship's interpretation, however, these expressions, "begotten again unto a lively hope," *relate to baptism!* True indeed, a man may be said, figuratively, to be born of water, or regenerated by water, into a relation to God and Christ, and his church, to new privileges and obligations. True indeed, baptism is a sign and seal of the New Testament: but are not millions of human beings regenerated in this figurative sense, without a "lively hope?" Were not many adult converts actually possessed of it *before* they were baptized? Did they not previous to their baptism contemplate the object and the basis of their expectation, which excited in them a "lively hope?" Did they not profess, as candidates for baptism, that they had

renounced, as well as that they would continue to renounce, all earthly and sensual expectations inconsistent with that blessed hope which they possessed? And as to baptized infants,—how can they be said, without perverting the use of language, to be regenerated by baptism to a lively hope? They have no knowledge of those objects and foundations whereby this hope is excited, — and are as destitute of Christian hope, as of Christian knowledge, of faith in Christ, or of the fear and love of God? That they are capable of regeneration, indeed, is admitted, as well as of remission, justification, holiness of nature, and heavenly blessedness: and we reflect with pleasure, that the holy scriptures afford many encouraging intimations relative to the salvation of dying infants—whether baptized or not. Though they have no hope, we have hope concerning them.

§ 14. "Dead in sins, and quickened together with Christ."* These expressions, his Lordship asserts, relate also to baptism. Let the context be examined, that peradventure baptism may be found. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were *dead in sins, hath quickened us together*

* Eph. ii. 5.

with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* The same spiritual and sublime strain is continued to the end of the chapter: but in what one part of the context there is an allusion to baptism, I am at a loss to conjecture. Let us then examine the words first quoted, where, if in any part, we may expect to find it. Here is, first, two states contrasted,—"dead in sin," and "quickened together with Christ:" secondly, an allusion to the resurrection of Christ, whereby he was quickened, or his humanity raised from death to a heavenly life: thirdly, the agent quickening us from a state of sin is God. But where is baptism?

§ 15. It is obvious that the two states are intended as a contrast. As the former state, therefore, is that of sinful death, the latter

* Eph. ii. 4—10.

must intend that of holy life. The contrast to death is life, and the contrast to sin is holiness; not relative, but real. The contrast to that relative holiness to which baptism introduces the subject, was a relative uncleanness. But will any one pretend, that to be "dead in sins" means to be "common or unclean" in an outward and merely relative sense, as the Gentiles were, compared with the Jews; or as unbelievers are compared with professing Christians? Surely to be "dead in trespasses and sins," must be something very different from being "unbaptized:" and consequently, to be "quickened" from that state, must be something different from being "baptized."

§ 16. How the allusion contained in the words to the resurrection of Christ, can befriend baptismal regeneration, is next to be considered. It will be found on impartial reflection, I believe, that a Christian cannot be said to be "quickened with Christ" any other way than by divine influence, in virtue of a vital union with Christ our divine head of influence, and by faith in him, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. To suppose that being "born of water" *makes* us alive to God, or *begets* faith in the subject, has not a ray of evidence, either from scripture testimony, from observed fact, or from rational analogy;

and to imagine that a spiritual principle of life, is the *immediate effect* of being baptized, is about as congruous, as to imagine that a substance is the immediate effect of a shadow! For what is baptism but a shadowy representation of that which is spiritual, as the sacramental supper is of the body and blood of Christ?

§ 17. The author of this change is GOD, who is rich in mercy, and great in love. But is it probable, that the richness of his mercy, and the greatness of his love towards us, should be so emphatically extolled, by the baptismal rite? Is it not rather as improbable as, that the same attributes should be commended by the rite of circumcision, or the ordinance of the Lord's supper? Might we not, in short, with as great propriety exclaim, how rich the genius, and how great the wisdom of SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN, who has given us a *model* of St. Paul's! It is somewhat more natural, I humbly submit, to connect the genius and skill with the grand structure itself, than with the model. Rich grace and great love are indeed manifest in an immortal soul being quickened into a moral and spiritual life, in giving us a Saviour and raising him from the dead, by virtue of which favour we may by faith reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God;" but the positive

rite that represents this, derives its value by reflection, rather than communicates the substance. When it can be proved that the sun derives his splendour from the moon, then, and not before, can it be proved that baptismal regeneration communicates quickening grace.

§ 18. "Buried with Christ in baptism."* Here, indeed, we find baptism, but in what expression shall we find the idea of spiritual blessings being communicated by it? Perhaps the context may furnish something *like* it. "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism: wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."† In this passage, we learn in the first place, that persons interested in the exalted Saviour, have a complete acceptance in him. In the next place, we learn that those who are so interested, have a complete substitute for the circumcision which was abolished;—a substitute both internal and external: since they had internally that which the literal circumcision represented, and which

* Col. ii. 12. † Ver. 10—12.

is called "circumcision made without hands:" viz. the circumcision of the heart by the power of grace: and they had externally the ordinance of baptism, called "the circumcision of Christ;" an ordinance appointed by Christ in the room of circumcision. Thirdly, we find that the external substitute for circumcision required of them conformity to Christ in whom they were complete. They were required, for instance, to part with sin, not merely the mutilation of a member, but the whole body of it,—to divest themselves of it, as a man puts off a vile garment, to wear it no more for ever: and this body of carnality they were required not only to crucify, but also to bury with Christ, who was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit." As Christ was "delivered for our offences" to death and the grave, so they were "required to reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin." They were also required by their baptism, to rise with Christ into a life resembling his—a new, a spiritual, a heavenly life, into which their baptism was a significant ceremonial initiation. In the fourth place, these words inform us, that this new life, which was both signified and required by baptism, was actually entered upon by faith—"through the faith of the operation of God."

§ 19. Let the candid and sound critic now determine, whether this passage was intended by

St. Paul, to convey the notion of water baptism *communicating* spiritual blessings; rather than significantly representing, and requiring of the baptized to put off the whole body of sin, to bury it for ever, to rise with Christ by faith, and to live a holy life to the glory of God. The apostle's design was evidently to counteract the Judaizing teachers, who pleaded for the importance of circumcision. In prosecution of that design, he shews, that they ought to part with that rite, because the end of it was answered. The ancient circumcision had an important meaning; in Christians that meaning was accomplished, because they were virtually circumcised, with the "circumcision not made with hands." The phrase "not made with hands," which occurs repeatedly in the New Testament, always denotes the spiritual reality of something adumbrated: and "the circumcision of Christ," or what was instituted by him in the room of circumcision, could not, in the nature of the case, communicate, but only represent and require the renunciation and burial of the old man of sin, and a new life of faith in Christ. And this faith was of "the operation of God," not "the immediate effect of baptism." The notion of baptism communicating "a lively hope," has been before considered; and the same arguments will prove that baptism does not communicate "the faith of the operation of

God," by which believers are risen with Christ.

§ 20. "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible."* His Lordship asserts, that *these* words relate to baptism. The leading position is, that *regeneration means baptism;* and as "born again" is synonymous with "regenerated," baptism must be intended. The words are found in connection as follows: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being *born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible*, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever."† These Christians had obeyed the truth; this obedience was through, or by the assistance of the Spirit; the effect of this obedience was the purification of their souls, and the love of the brethren, which they were called upon to cultivate. In order to enforce this duty more powerfully, they are reminded, that they were regenerated; and lest there should be any mistake respecting the *kind* of regeneration intended, they are told it was that which was derived from an incorruptible seed—the word of God. Now, is it possible for an attentive

* 1 Pet. i. 23. † Ver. 22, 23.

and impartial mind to suppose that the apostle meant, "born of water," or the regeneration of baptism? On what principle can such an opinion be founded? Does it not appear with a noon-day plainness, that he designs that regeneration which takes place on the reception of God's testimony; and which consists in the exercise of faith and love? That "new man" which consists in knowledge and other Christian graces, is formed by the union of a gracious principle with divine truth: the soul is regenerated, properly speaking, by the Spirit, but the body of Christian graces requires for its formation the word of truth, before either knowledge, faith, love, hope, fear, and the like, can have existence: baptismal water is corruptible seed, but "the word of our God abideth for ever."

§ 21. "Baptism doth now *save us*, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* These expressions, in their detached form, undoubtedly carry a *semblance* of proof in favour of his Lordship's interpretation; but the words with which they stand connected entirely deprive him even of that semblance. "Once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* It is obvious that St. Peter institutes a comparison between the unbelieving inhabitants before the deluge, and those who reject the gospel, on the one hand; and between believing Noah with his family, and professing Christians, on the other: the rejectors of God's testimony, in both cases, were the objects of divine displeasure; but those who believed and obeyed this testimony were objects of the divine approbation and care: the water of the deluge formed a separation between two dispensations; and so does that of baptism. But, we are expressly told, that "by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."† He was a partaker of saving faith, righteousness, and true holiness, *before* he was saved by water. Consequently, his being preserved in the ark related only to God's external dispensation towards him; he was delivered from that calamity which divine judgment brought upon the unbelieving and disobedient, in *consequence* of his being "found

* 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. † Heb. xi. 7.

righteous in his generation." In like manner believing Jews and Gentiles entered into the Christian church (typified by the ark), that they might escape the righteous judgment of God which awaited professed unbelievers, and God sealed to them by baptism his new covenant. Christ's obedience, as our substitute, was sealed by his blood and death; but his testamentary grant of privileges and blessings to be enjoyed on gospel terms, is both signified and sealed by the institution of baptism. A seal affixed to a will is designed to certify that it is the real testament of him who seals it.

§ 22. But it is very observable, how particularly the apostle cautions us against the inference of *water* baptism effecting our salvation, as if aware that some might be disposed to form such conclusion: "Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." The spiritual salvation is secured to us not by the external rite, but by a conscientious regard to God's covenant, of which that rite is the sign and seal. Not the *profession* of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which was expected to be made by the candidate, but the godly sincerity of that profession. A hypocrite might be admitted to the church, as Ham was admitted into the ark; but as the ark and the deluge made no one

partaker of spiritual salvation who was destitute of it before, so neither does the baptismal institution. In short, St. Peter seems, from the whole drift of his discourse, to shew the obligation of professing Christians to answer the design of their initiation into the gospel dispensation; and this they were to do by "sanctifying the Lord God in their hearts," by being "ready always to give an answer to every man that asked them a reason of the hope that was in them" with meekness and reverential fear, and by having "a good conscience toward God." The "resurrection of Jesus Christ" was the *basis* both of their hope, and of their baptismal confession.

§ 23. "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."* His Lordship asserts, that these words also relate to baptism, as an act essential to the character of a Christian, and of such importance that it is declared to be instrumental to our salvation. St. Paul, writing to Titus, observes, "we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our

* Tit. iii. 5.

Saviour toward man appeared—not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration (και), *even* the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."* In this passage we observe, first, the deep depravity of mankind, Paul and Timothy not excepted, before their conversion to Christianity; secondly, that the remedy for so great an evil was provided by the loving kindness of God our Saviour, to the exclusion of all human works; thirdly, that we are saved, or made personally partakers of new covenant blessings, according to the mercy of God,—not only the preparation being made by divine love, and announced in the gospel, but also the application of the remedy being effected by the merciful act of God; fourthly, that the change itself produced is compared to the washing of a new-born infant; lastly, that the cleansing which belongs to, and is performed upon one "born again," is the renewal of the soul by the Holy Ghost. The washing with water belongs to the natural birth, the renewing of the Holy Ghost belongs to the spiritual birth; and this is

* Tit. iii. 3—7.

allusively expressed "the washing of regeneration."

§ 24. So far is this text from countenancing the notion of baptism being called "regeneration," and of its being 'instrumental to our salvation,' that there does not appear, on fair examination, even an *allusion* to baptism. It is well known that the conjunction (και) is often used exegetically for *even*, or *namely;* and the nature of the subject requires it to be so taken in this connection: since, as I have already shewn, we cannot admit, without affronting the general tenor of Scripture, that God, according to his mercy, saves us by baptism—or that an external rite is an essential part of our salvation—or that the spiritual renovation is an immediate effect of it. And supposing the apostle meant to express baptism by the periphrasis "the washing of regeneration," how much more natural the idea, that he designed the thing signified rather than the sign itself;—for the mercy of God, according to which we are saved, is manifested incomparably more by the former than by the latter. Thus, whether the term (και) be used in a connective or an explanatory way, it does not follow that baptism is instrumental to our salvation. For, if "regeneration" be taken for "being born of God," or "born of the Spirit," or "born from above," the "*renewing* of the Holy

Ghost," may well express *progressive* sanctifying influence.

§ 25. Once more, we are told by his Lordship, that the following words declare baptism to be 'instrumental to our salvation.' "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* Supposing "the kingdom of God" to mean the visible Christian church, we admit that no one can, according to the appointed rule, enter into it without being "born of water," or baptized: but if we understand by it the heavenly state, or future happiness in another world, is it probable, is it conceivable, that our Lord should mean, that no one can see it without *baptism?* Is it more probable, or even more conceivable, than the sentiment, that no one has spiritual life except he *literally* "eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man?" And yet men of great name have espoused this last mentioned tenet. If, however, the phrase "born again," be understood to signify a *spiritual* change, no difficulty remains; as it is at once rational, and perfectly conformable to other inspired declarations. "Without *holiness* no man shall see the Lord." "Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for they shall see God." "If any man have not the *spirit of*

* John iii. 3.

Christ he is none of his." Beside, Nicodemus needed not to be told, that the baptismal purification was an ordinance of initiation into the Christian community; that being a matter of public notoriety, and a subject of conversation among the Jews: but there was great need of his being informed, that this *alone* was not sufficient; that a man must be also "born again," or "from above;" "born of the Spirit."

§ 26. We concur with his Lordship when he states, that Christians have 'a *double birth*, 'namely, a natural birth from Adam, and a 'spiritual birth from Christ. There cannot be 'two natural births, neither can there be two 'spiritual births. There cannot be two first 'entrances into a natural life, neither can there 'be two first entrances into a spiritual life. 'There cannot be a second baptism, or a second 'regeneration.'* And we cordially agree with Bishop PEARSON, to whose words Bishop TOMLINE alludes, when he says, "A double birth there is, and the world consists of two, the first and the second man. And though the incorruptible seed be the word of God, and the dispensers of it in some sense may say, as St. Paul spake unto the Corinthians, 'I have begotten you through the gospel;' yet he is

* Refut. p. 85.

the true Father, whose word it is, and that is God, even 'the Father of light, who of his own will begat us with the word of truth.' Thus 'whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;' which *regeneration* is as it were a second creation: 'for we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' And he alone who did create us out of nothing, can beget us again, and make us of the new creation.—Hence hath he the name of Father, and they of sons who are born of him; and so from that internal act of spiritual regeneration another title of paternity redoundeth unto the divinity. Nor is this the only second birth or sole regeneration in a Christian sense; the soul, which after its natural being requires a birth into the life of grace, is also after that *born again* into a life of glory. Our Saviour puts us in mind of *the regeneration*, 'when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory.' The resurrection of our bodies is a kind of coming out of the womb of the earth, and entering upon immortality, a nativity into another life."*

§ 27. To be "born of God" is a second birth, and a second birth is surely regeneration: But "he that *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ,

* PEARSON on the Creed, Art. i. p. 27. 4th ed.

is born of God;" and therefore is *regenerated*, according to the plain testimony of scripture. Now according to the same testimony, adult converts were required to believe that Jesus is the Christ *before* they were baptized; and the apostles consequently baptized them as regenerated persons; for, as believers, they were born of God. This is a plain fact, that appears on the face of the Christian history, and pervades the whole spirit and design of the Christian dispensation; and with this before him, let the impartial enquirer determine, whether 'the 'word regeneration is in scripture *solely* and '*exclusively* applied to the one *immediate effect* '*of baptism* once administered.'

§ 28. As the Holy Scriptures, in the rational estimation of Protestants, are the rule of faith and practice, to the exclusion of the decisions of ecclesiastical councils and fathers, and as we have the sacred text in at least equal purity with what the church had in their days, it is of little moment to us how they interpreted the text. They were as liable to err as those who succeed them; they had the same source of fallibility, and in many respects their advantages were inferior to our own. It may be worth while, however, briefly to examine whether this assertion be perfectly correct, viz.—That the ancient Christians '*never* use the word regenerate

'or born again, but that they mean or denote 'by it baptism:' and, in other words, that 'regeneration in the language of the Fathers '*constantly* signifies the participation of the 'sacrament of baptism.'

§ 29. CLEMENS, of Alexandria, speaking of a woman of suspicious virtue, and alluding to the words of scripture "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," observes, that "she lives indeed in sin, but is dead to the divine commands: but becoming penitent, as if *born again* by conversion, she has the *regeneration* of life. The old offender indeed is dead, but she who has *a birth by repentance* has entered into life again."* EUSEBIUS applies the term *regeneration* to the renovation of the *world* at the last day:"† and BASIL, the Great, employs it in the same way, when, in reference to the Stoics, he observes, that they introduce an unlimited number of corruptions and *renovations* (or *regenerations*) of the world."‡ St. AUGUSTINE, alluding to Matt. xix. 28, (εν τη παλιγγενεσία) *in the regeneration*, remarks, that our Lord

* αναγεννηθεισα παλιγγενεσίαν κατα μετανοιαν γεννηθεισης. CLEM. Alex. Strom. lib. ii.

† των ολων παλιγγενεσιαν. EUSEB. Prepar. Evang. lib. xv. cap. 11.

‡ απειρους φθορας κόσμου και παλιγγενεσιας. BASIL. Mag. Hom. ii. in Hexaëm.

intends, doubtless, in this place, by *regeneration*, the final *resurrection*;"* and we find expressions to the same purpose in different parts of his works. The word *regeneration* is employed in a similar manner by ORIGEN, JEROME, and BERNARD. THEOPHYLACT, explaining our Lord's expression, Matt. xix. says expressly, "understand by *regeneration*, the resurrection."† And THEOPHANES, paraphrasing the same words, says, "Ye shall be rewarded in the general resurrection; which he called *regeneration*, as it *begets us anew*, and restores us into our pristine state."‡ The same writer again observes elsewhere, that the "*resurrection* is a restoration to our primitive state, which we expect to obtain in the *regeneration*, by the favour of him who has renewed us by himself, and has endowed our nature with incorruption."‖ Thus also DIONYSIUS, the Areopagite, discoursing on the future perfect state of the saints, remarks, that "holy souls, which in the present state are liable to failures, shall *in the regeneration* be transformed to a state of immutability and of

* Regeneratione hoc loco, ambigente nullo, novisimam resurrectionem vocat. AUG. Ep. ad Pelag. lib. iii. cap. 3.

† *Παλιγγενεσιαν, την αναστασιν νόει.* Theop. in Matt. xix.

‡ ην παλιγγενεσίαν εκαλεθεν, ως αυθις αναγενωσαν ημας. THEOPH. Hom. xli.

‖ ην και ημεις απεκδεχομεθα εν τη παλιγγενεσια λαβειν Hom. xxxiv.

complete conformity to God."* EPIPHANIUS, speaking of the supreme artificer, in allusion to prophetic language, under the character of a potter, observes, that "it behoved him to take care of the vessel formed by his own hand; and though, on account of its being vitiated through disobedience, it was meet to turn it into its original mass of clay, yet *in the regeneration*, he should restore the vessel, by a resurrection, to its ancient brightness and beauty."† BASIL, of Cæsarea, speaking of scornful philosophers, says, "they laugh at us inordinately when we tell them of the end of this world and *the regeneration of life*,"‡ or a future period of existence. ATHANASIUS: "*In the regeneration* we shall all rise as one man."‖ ISIDORE of Pelusium observes, "I could shew from all the sacred writings that the affairs of the Jews are brought to an end, and shall have no *regeneration*."¶

* Εν τη παλιγγενεσια. DIONYS. Areop. de Hier. Eccl. cap. vii.

† Ινα αυθις εν τη παλιγγενεσια ανασκευαση τὸ αγγος εν τῃ αναστασει. EPIPH. Heres. xxxvii.

‡ Περι συντελειας του κοσμου τουτου και παλιγγενεσιας αιωνος. BASIL. Cæsar. Hom. i. in Hexaëm.

‖ Εν τη παλιγγενεσια ως εις ανθρωπος απανιστάμεθα. ATHAN. Quest. xxiv. ad Antioch.

¶ Και παλιγγενεσιαν ουχ εξει. ISID. Pelus. lib. iv. epist. 17.

§ 30. That the term (παλιγγενεσία) *regeneration* is often used by the Greek Fathers, in a figurative sense, for baptism, is undeniable; but the preceding quotations are sufficient to shew what reliance is to be placed upon the assertions; That 'the word *regeneration* is in 'scripture *solely* and *exclusively* applied to the 'one immediate effect of baptism once adminis-'tered'—'*regeneration, as often as* 'tis used in 'the scripture books, signifies the baptismal rege-'neration'—'regeneration in the language of 'the Fathers *constantly* signifies the participation 'of the sacrament of baptism.' The Greek Fathers use another term (αναγέννησις) which literally answers to *regeneration* in the same way as the former, *viz.* to express, figuratively, the ordinance of baptism,—but not 'solely and exclusively.' Thus GREGORY Nazianzen, in allusion to the Holy Spirit, says, that "he effects the *spiritual regeneration.*"* St. *Chrysostom* assigns the reason why the term *regeneration* is applied to baptism. "Because baptism is said to be a *sign* of death and resurrection, therefore it is called regeneration."† CYRIL, of Jerusalem, speaking of Christ's

* Δημιουργει τεν πιευματικην αναγεννησιν. Greg. Naz. Orat. xliv.

† Επει και θανατου και αναστασεως συμβολον λεγεται ειναι το βαπτισμα, διὸ και αναγεννησις καλειται. CHRYSOST. in Joh. iii.

resurrection and ascension, says, "On the fortieth day after his *regeneration* from the dead, he ascended to the Jerusalem above."*

§ 31. On the whole, it appears abundantly evident, that the term Regeneration is used by the inspired and ecclesiastical writers, to express *any great change*, whether mental or corporeal, physical or supernatural, where any resemblance is discovered between that change and a birth: and as baptism is a *sign* of entering out of the world into the church, and out of a sinful into a holy state, it became customary to express that great change by *regeneration.* But surely a *gracious change* from a death in sin to a life in righteousness is great, whether it take place on believing before baptism, or after: and for calling such a change regeneration, the Calvinists have sufficient reason, not only on the ground of scripture usage, but also that of the Fathers. The frequent use of it, too, in reference to baptism, being calculated to convey false notions of a positive institute, they are fully justified in using it very sparingly in that connection, but more emphatically to express a spiritual change, as a change of infinitely greater moment;

* Μετα τεσσαρακοντα ημερας της εκ νεκρων αναγεννήσεως εις την ανω Ιερουσαλημ ανεληλυθε. CYRIL. Jeros. Orat. de Simone. Biblioth. Patrum, tom. xiii.

especially considering the proneness of mankind to content themselves with a form of godliness, while denying the power. If at any time, again, it be taken, in popular language, for *conversion*, this also, it must be admitted, is a great change, resembling a birth. And is it not of incomparably greater moment, to convince men that without repentance, faith, and conversion, they cannot see the kingdom of God, than to convince them that without baptism they cannot be saved? Why should so much earnestness be used in urging a matter of such easy acquisition, nay, in urging the importance of what is already performed upon millions who are nevertheless "in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity?" In theological discussions the Calvinists sufficiently distinguish between the two great changes, regeneration, and conversion; and even if in popular addresses they were occasionally to confound them, a little inaccuracy in the rigid use of terms may surely be overlooked, where earnestness, zeal, and benevolent exertions, are employed in promoting the everlasting welfare of mankind.

SECT. II.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on JUSTIFICATION, *examined.*

§ 1. Importance of the doctrine.

§ 2. His Lordship's view of Justification stated. § 3, 4. That it is conveyed by baptism examined. § 5. The Church of England supposes candidates for baptism to be in a justified state. § 6. The Eleventh Article and Homily on Justification, against the Bishop.

§ 7. Justifying faith productive of good works. § 8. These justify our faith, as evidence. § 9—11. St. Paul's doctrine of Justification. § 12—14. Also St. James's.

§ 15—19. That Justification is lost and recovered successively, examined. § 20—22. The true ground of the *imputation* of righteousness. § 23—25. What the condition of *continuance* in Justification. § 26. The difference between the Justification of a *person*, and that of his *actions*.

§ 1. THE doctrine of a sinner's justification before God, in the character of a holy and righteous judge, is of importance to men, in proportion as the knowledge of the way to happiness is conducive to its enjoyment: and to an intelligent being, who is required to "seek the Lord while he may be found"—to "come before the Lord" with a suitable offering—and to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling"—it is, beyond all question, of the greatest moment to know the divinely appointed method of pardon and acceptance. Accordingly we find, that when any remarkable revival of real religion has

taken place in the Christian church, from its foundation to the present time, the minds of men have been powerfully impressed with the importance of this doctrine. It is a clear fact, that every extensive reformation has given it peculiar prominence, and that those who have opposed the work in a mass, have directed much of their opposition against the doctrine of justification by faith. Not to mention other instances, those of Paul and his inspired associates, and of LUTHER, with his ablest coadjutors in the reformation, are striking examples. St. Paul directs the full force of his holy reasoning and eloquence to establish the point of justification by grace, through faith, to the exclusion of every thing else, though careful to inculcate the necessity of good works and holy obedience on another ground: and LUTHER, who had entered far into the views and experience of the apostle, dwelt much on justification by faith to the exclusion of works, both from the pulpit and the press. As the former, again, was virulently opposed by the Jewish advocates for good works, so was the latter by the Popish hierarchy, who pretended great concern for the cause of religion and the purity of the Catholic faith. In a word, it was not without reason that LUTHER, speaking on the point of justification, termed it, *Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*, a doctrine inti-

mately connected with either the welfare or the ruin of the Christian church.

§ 2. The Bishop of Lincoln has published his views of this Christian doctrine in a manner sufficiently explicit, and I shall give him credit for not being displeased with a candid examination of those views. His Lordship maintains, that baptism conveys justification—that faith without good works will not justify—that simply to profess faith in the Trinity, and to promise future obedience, is sufficient for justification. His assertions, on the first of these points, are:—'Baptism, administered according 'to the appointed form to a true believer, would '*convey justification;* or, in other words, the 'baptized person would receive remission of 'his past sins, would be reconciled to God, and 'be accounted just and righteous in his sight. '*Baptism* would not only wash away the guilt 'of all his former sins, both original and actual, 'and *procure* to him *acceptance with God*, but 'it would also communicate a portion of divine 'grace, to counteract the depravity of his 'nature, and to strengthen his good resolutions. '*Baptism* was invariably the instrument, or 'external form, by which *justification was* '*conveyed.*'* 'It is the doctrine of our church,

* Refut. pp. 132, 133.

'that baptism duly administered *confers justification.*'*

§ 3. The sentiment that baptism washes away the guilt of sin, and communicates grace, has been examined before. We have now to consider its efficacy to convey *justification.* The expression itself is remarkable, 'would '*convey* justification.' Elsewhere his Lordship very properly observes, 'Justification is a 'forensic term—to be justified before God, 'signifies to be *declared* and accounted as just 'and righteous in his sight.'† Justification then is an *act* or declaration of God respecting a person; for, as St. Paul observes, "It is God that justifieth." To baptize is an act of man: but how the act of man can *convey* a future act of God, it is difficult to conceive. The prophets and apostles 'conveyed' to the people, as a matter of testimony, what God had done, or was about to do; but when they performed miracles, or when miraculous effects *followed* certain acts or declarations of theirs, there would be, I conceive, no propriety in saying that the appointed sign *conveyed* the effect. Even supposing baptism were invariably followed by justification as a consequent, it would be an erroneous mode of expression to say, that the

* Refut. p. 147. † Ibid. p. 98.

former *conveyed* the latter. And if it be said, that not the act of God is conveyed, but the privilege resulting from that act; then it is not justification itself, according to his Lordship's own definition of it, but some other idea to which the term is vaguely applied. This, however, is of small moment compared with the sentiment here controverted.

§ 4. His Lordship requires, that baptism be 'administered according to the *appointed* form.' Here it is but an act of justice, not to say liberality, to suppose, that 'the appointed form' refers not to human but divine legislation; not to any "form" drawn up and enjoined by men, but to that which is contained in the New Testament. It would be reflecting unmerited reproach on his Lordship's character, to suppose he insinuates, that none can administer baptism according to the form appointed in the New Testament, but those who administer it according to the form contained in the book of Common Prayer. Let it however be in any "form" his Lordship pleases. It is of greater moment, in the present argument, that he supposes the adult candidate for baptism to be 'a true believer;' a requisition, which, of course, excludes all hypocritical pretenders from a participation of spiritual blessings communicated by the ordinance. Let us now, with his

Lordship, 'suppose a person to have been 'educated as a Jew or a Heathen, and suppose 'him, which was the case of every Jew and of 'every Heathen, to have been guilty of a 'variety of sins; and suppose him, by attending 'to the evidences of the truth of the gospel, to 'have been convinced that Jesus was the 'Messiah, the promised Saviour of the world; 'such a person could not but feel contrition 'for the wickedness of his past life, and be 'anxious to avoid the punishment to which he 'was liable.'* It is not our province to say, here he must stop, until he is baptized. No; many, very many, among 'Jews and Heathens,' upon hearing revealed truth, have gone much further. There are many Christians who regard the baptism of infants as unscriptural, and of course their children grow up under Christian instruction, and attend the public ministry of the word, while unbaptized. We may then suppose what fact has often verified, that an unbaptized hearer of the gospel is brought to feel deep contrition, on account of his sins; to be truly penitent, so as to hate all sin; sincerely to deny himself, to take up his cross, to "pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand" that offend; to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient

* Refut. p. 132.

Saviour; to trust in him for salvation, as the prophet, priest, and king of his church; to believe with the heart unto righteousness; and to confess with the mouth unto salvation; to obey from the heart the heavenly call, and to resolve, by the assistance of divine grace, to render unreserved obedience to what God's word requires. We suppose this person not yet baptized, but only a candidate for baptism. He is not yet "born of water,"—but is he *therefore* not "born of the Spirit?" In the face of so much evidence, so many merciful declarations, that God will pardon the penitent, accept the returning sinner, justify him that believeth in Jesus,—who shall affirm, that this man lies in the pollution of sin, and under the load of guilt; that he is not accepted, but condemned, though he has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him; and that he is in this dreadful situation *because* he is not baptized, though made willing in the day of God's power to submit to every ordinance of divine appointment! One might think it impossible, not to say for a Christian divine, but for any one reading the scriptures, unattended with corrupt glosses, with a sincere desire to be rightly informed, to harbour any such thought.

§ 5. It is farther asserted by his Lordship,

that 'it is the doctrine of our church, that 'baptism duly administered *confers justification*.' I hope this assertion is made through inadvertence, for the credit of the church by law established. Were this clearly proved, it would be a strong argument with all unprejudiced men to leave its communion. Any church whatever advancing an opinion so contrary to scripture, to piety, and the plain dictates of reason, would prove itself corrupt in no small degree: and with regard to the church of England I would beg leave to say, that in proportion as it approaches to the sentiment ascribed to it, so will be the evidence that it is but partially reformed from the superstitions of dark ages. In the Church Catechism, in reply to the question, "What is required of persons to be baptized?" it is said, "Repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament." Are not the persons who really possess these qualifications, pardoned as penitent, and justified as believers, *before* they are baptized? In one of the Homilies, entitled "Of good works annexed unto Faith," a quotation from CHRYSOSTOM is introduced: "I can shew a man that by faith without works lived, and came to heaven; but without faith never man had life. The thief, that was hanged when Christ suffered, did believe only, and the most merciful God *justified*

him." Had he lived to receive baptism, would his justification have been deferred, until that rite "conferred" it? Or, if baptism, be the the appointed mode of "conveying" or "confirming" justification, what right have those who hold that sentiment to conclude that this person *was* justified? If it be said, that he gave sufficient evidence of repentance and faith; so do thousands of converts, in like manner, *before* they are admitted into the visible and explicit communion of Christians by baptism. What is done prior to that transaction, certainly cannot be the effect of it.

§ 6. "Faith without good works will not justify." This is his Lordship's avowed sentiment, and these are his words: 'Neither in our 'articles, nor in our liturgy, is it said, that faith 'without *Good Works* will justify.'* 'Let it be 'remarked, that whenever St. Paul, in speaking 'of Justification, uses the words Works or Deeds 'he invariably adds of the law;' 'he frequently 'says, a man is not justified by the works of the 'law, but not once does he say, a man is not 'justified by works.'† It is of little moment what the articles and the liturgy say, any further than they are consistent with scripture and the analogy of divine dispensations. And as the

* Refut. p. 155. † Ibid. p. 120.

compilers were men of like passions with ourselves, however learned, or pious, or desirous of stating the real truth, their successors have an equal right to bring their statements to the test, as they had respecting those of their predecessors. It is, however, expressly stated in the eleventh article, "We are justified *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, *without* our *own works* or deservings." The article cannot mean our *bad* works, which would be absurd; and as all our works are either good or bad, the meaning must be without our own *good* works. In the liturgy it is said, that God "pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly *repent*, and unfeignedly *believe* in his holy gospel." Now as God never pardoneth and absolveth any who are not at the same time justified, it is clear, that true repentance and unfeigned faith, without good works, in the estimation of the church, justify. The Homily on Justification, to which the elventh article refers, observes, "The true understanding of this doctrine, we be justified freely by faith without works, or that we be justified by faith in Christ *only*, is not, that this our *own act* to believe in Christ, or this our *faith* in Christ, which is within us, doth justify us, and deserve our justification unto us—we must renounce the merit of all virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as

things that be far too weak, and insufficient, and imperfect, to deserve remission of our sins, and our justification: and therefore we must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour Christ Jesus, the Son of God, once offered for us upon the cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and remission."—Here two things are maintained; first, that the converted sinner is justified by faith in Christ *only*, or freely by faith without works, and consequently *good works;* for no one ever supposed that bad works can justify; and, secondly, that faith itself, as well as all virtues and good deeds, are renounced in point of *merit* for justification.

§ 7. Let the reader now reflect what reliance ought to be placed upon this assertion: 'Neither 'in our articles, nor in our liturgy, is it said, that 'faith without good works will justify.' That the expressions of "Faith only," and "Faith without works" were not intended to exclude the necessity of Works for *other* purposes, we freely allow; but if words have any meaning, they were intended to exclude them, however good, in the point of Justification. We also maintain, that a true and lively faith is *productive* of good works, as a good tree bringeth forth good fruit; and that its character may be best known to us by its effects; but surely, as

a cause is distinct from its effects, as a good tree differs from its fruits, and a principle in the mind from its operations, so a *good faith* is a different thing from *good works*, and therefore should neither be identified nor confounded. But though Calvinists avoid this, they are in the constant habit of insisting, that a fruitless faith is not saving. They urge the importance of good works on several accounts; for they know that God requires universal obedience—that they are well pleasing to God—that Christians are justified and renewed, in order that they may walk in them unto all pleasing—that they are profitable unto men—that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him—and that they are bound, in duty and in gratitude, to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. They reprobate with warmth a dead faith, and inculcate with earnestness "charity, and all other virtues and good deeds," as indispensable towards forming the Christian character.

§ 8. That good works *justify* the goodness of faith, and of the Christian character, by way of evidence to ourselves and others, is not denied; as good fruit is an evidence of a good tree. "By their fruits ye shall *know* them." A true Christian is ingrafted into Christ, in a higher and far more important sense than by

baptism, or an outward profession. By faith they abide in him the true vine; and thence they derive their sap and fruitfulness. They are taught by experience, as well as by scripture, that except they abide in Christ by faith, they cannot glorify God by bringing forth much fruit; yea, that they "can do nothing,"—nothing that deserves the name of Christian obedience, or acceptable service. They know that "without faith, it is impossible to please God," as well as that the faith which is dead and not productive of holy obedience is unavailable both for salvation hereafter and for justification in this life. Calvinists are persuaded that we should be careful and strenuous to maintain good works, and to discharge all personal and relative duties; that no sin should have dominion over us, and that we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. They seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well-doing.

§ 9. Not once does Paul say, 'a man is not 'justified by works.' His Lordship takes it for granted that whenever the apostle mentions the Works or Deeds "of the law," in speaking of justification, he means the ceremonial works of

the law.* But why should this be supposed, since he uses the same expression, when the ceremonial law cannot be meant? For of the Gentiles he says, "Which shew *the work of the law* written in their hearts."† Beside, was not the moral law included in the Mosaic? And was it not the Mosaic law, consisting of moral and ceremonial precepts, the works of which are excluded from justification? Would St. Paul's reasoning have been fairly answered by a Jew pleading, that he did not expect to be justified by the works of the ceremonial, but of the moral law? that he devoutly worshipped the true God, observed every moral precept, and performed his duty to God and man? Would not St. Paul have replied, "You are still under a mistake; this is not God's way of justifying and saving sinners. It is not by "works of righteousness which we have done," whether ceremonial or moral, that he saves, much less justifies us, but by his grace." It is not merely the *merit* of works—the works of any law, whether of nature or of revelation, whether ceremonial or moral—that the apostle in his reasonings rejects, but also the *performance* of such works, as requisite for justification. A cordial reception of Jesus Christ as the end, the

* Refut. p. 120. † Rom ii. 15.

consummation of the law of Moses, for righteousness to every one that believeth, however deficient his own works of righteousness have been, entitles the returning offender to justification of life, by a merciful appointment.

§ 10. His Lordship has hazarded the assertion too hastily, when he says that whenever St. Paul, speaking of justification, 'uses the 'words Works or Deeds, he invariably adds '*of the law*.' For thus the apostle reasons: "If Abraham were justified by WORKS, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God."—"To him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without* WORKS."* And what he says of salvation is *a fortiori* applicable to justification. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of WORKS, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."† "Who hath saved us (in which justified is necessarily included) and called us with a holy calling, not according to our WORKS,

* Rom. iv. 2, 5, 6. † Eph. ii. 8—10.

but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."* "Not by WORKS *of righteousness*, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."† From these and similar passages, what can be more evident than the apostle's design to exclude not only the merits of our works, but also our works themselves, *good* works, works of righteousness, from having any part in our justification?

§ 11. That the apostle does not confine his meaning to the ceremonial law, when he excludes the works or deeds "of the law" from having any share in justification, or primary acceptance into the divine favour, is manifest by comparing one part of his discourse with another. "By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."‡ His argument necessarily requires that the term "law" be used in the same sense in both the propositions. Now will any one suppose that in the latter proposition he means, By the *ceremonial* law is the knowledge of sin? Does he not evidently mean the same law to which St. John refers when he says, "Sin is the transgression of *the law?*"—and no one surely will pretend that St. John means the

* 2 Tim. 9. † Tit. iii. 5. ‡ Rom. iii. 20.

ceremonial law. St. Paul himself says, "The law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."* "What shall we say then, Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by *the law*: for I had not known lust (or concupiscence) except *the law* had said, Thou shall not covet."† From these passages, among many others, it is obvious, first, that the law by which is the knowledge of sin, is the *moral* rather than the ceremonial, though a breach of the latter, while in force, was also sinful: secondly, that no one is justified by the deeds of this law, or ever shall be,—not by that law which is holy, just, and good,—not by that law which is spiritual, and in which the renewed soul delights, which with his heart he serves, and to which the carnal mind is not subject. Again, the apostle observes, "If there had been a law given which could have given life (i. e. a title to life, or justification,) verily righteousness would have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."‡ Here, decidedly, every law whatever, and therefore the works or deeds of every law, are excluded from the possibility of giving to fallen man a life of acceptance with God in the point of justification.

* Rom. iv. 15. † Rom. vii. 7. ‡ Gal. iii. 21, 22.

§ 12. The apostle James had to do with those who *abused* the doctrine of justification by faith without works. And this abuse consisted, like most other abuses, in drawing false inferences from important truths. If obedience to law, if works of righteousness, be not necessary to justification, but faith only; then how are they necessary at all? If our doings will not justify us, we may content ourselves with being believers without being doers. Nay, says the apostle, this is a false and pernicious inference; "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."* "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man *say* he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?—Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."† Their plea that they had *faith*, was no better than the plea of a barren fig-tree, that it was of a *good* quality, and therefore should not be cut down as a cumberer of the ground, though year after year it produced no good fruit. Their inference was as irrational as if they had said, we did not *obtain* our natural life by eating and drinking, therefore to partake of food is not necessary to *preserve* life. Far different was the conduct of Abraham, after enjoying the peculiar favour of being accepted through faith. He went on to

* Jam. i. 22. † Jam. ii. 14, 17.

perform such works as God required of him, and for this his renown is in the church. "Was not Abraham our father *justified* (i. e. *approved)* by works, (by acts of obedience to the divine mandate) when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought (συνεργει, *co-operates)* with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" That is, (ετελειωθη) *made complete*, by attaining its appropriate end, as a good tree by the fruit it bears. The good fruit is the completed end of its good quality. The tree is previously good; but that goodness is crowned, and the evidence of it is perfected, by the fruit appearing. "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: (i. e. a righteous act, deserving commendation), and he was called the friend of God."* How convincing is this argument against those "filthy dreamers" who infested the church even in the apostolic age, and more or less ever since, and who held that the "*obedience* of faith," and "*works* of righteousness," were needless, if they could but "say" they had faith.

§ 13. St. James's inference, from the above statement, deserves particular notice. "Ye see

* Jam. ii. 21—23.

then how that by works a man is justified, (i. e. *approved*, so as to be commended by the righteous judge), and not by faith only." That is, it was not the faith of Abraham *only*, that formed his righteous character, on account of which he had the approbation of God and commendation from the church, but his works also, his works of faith and holy obedience. And this is applicable to every man professing faith in Christ. To boast of justification by faith, when we cannot "shew our faith by our works," is ruinous presumption. The solifidians whom St. James attacks with holy zeal and force of argument, boasted probably, that Rahab had no *works* to shew, but was justified by faith only, and therefore needed no further care. "Was not Rahab the harlot justified (i. e. *approved)* by *works* (commendable deeds, as the effects of her faith), when she had received the messengers (of God), and had sent them out another way?" Was not her faith operative,—were not these acts the fruit of her belief in the God of Israel, and well pleasing and acceptable in his estimation? Go ye, and do likewise, instead of boasting of a false gift. "For as the body without the spirit (or breath) is dead, so faith without works (such obedience as God requires) is dead also."* While you

* Jam. ii. 24—26.

discard those things which Christ has commanded, and which God's holy law requires from every rational being, you have but the "dead body" of faith. What have you to do with peace, or a justifying righteousness? You have neither lot nor portion in the privileges of the righteous, who can "shew their faith by their works."

§ 14. His Lordship supposes the meaning of St. James to be, that a dead faith was not sufficient for their '*continuance* in a state of justifi-' cation.'* But what evidence can be adduced, that a *dead faith* has ever introduced any man into a state of justification? If the mere circumstance of a profession of faith, or being baptized, introduced them, we must conclude, however absurdly, that Simon Magus was justified, while at the same time he was in "the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity." The assumption, that one kind of faith is required for justification, and another for salvation, is alike unsupported by scripture and reason,—a distinction invented by popish ignorance for the sake of giving countenance to the notion of baptism justifying *ex opere operato.* His Lordship says, that 'God is pleased to grant remission ' of all past sins, for the sake of his blessed Son,

* Refut. p. 119.

'on account of *Faith only;* but he requires 'from those, whom he thus graciously receives 'into his favour, an implicit obedience to his 'commands in future: if they disobey, the 'pardon is cancelled, the state of acceptance is 'forfeited, and liability to punishment ensues.'* Now it is natural to ask, is the "faith" on account of which remission of all past sins is granted, and consequently justification, a dead, or a lively faith? If the former, we have the evidence to seek that they ever were justified,—and how can that which was never granted be 'cancelled?' If the latter, how comes a lively faith not to produce good works, of which they are the appropriate evidence? But on this point his Lordship is still more explicit.

§ 15. We are told that, 'as in the case of 'adult converts from Heathenism in the days 'of the apostles, the state of justification, thus '[by repentance and faith] recovered by penitent 'Christians, does not necessarily remain; its 'continuance depends upon their abstinence 'from those sins which are forbidden, and upon 'the practice of those virtues which are en-'joined, in the gospel. By the indulgence of '*any* criminal passion, or by the neglect of *any* 'practicable duty, the state of justification is

* Refut. p. 124.

'forfeited, and the offender becomes again 'liable to the wrath of God. Repentance 'therefore and Faith, if sincere, will in all 'cases *procure* justification; but obedience must 'be added, to *preserve* the state of justification 'when obtained.'* This it must be acknowledged, is also the opinion of Bishop BULL, as quoted by his Lordship. Again, 'Adults are 'not required to perform any good works pre-'vious to baptism, but simply to *profess* their 'faith in the blessed Trinity, and to *promise* 'future obedience to God's holy will and com-'mandments: they are then *baptized*, and by '*this spiritual regeneration* they receive re-'mission of all their former sins, both original 'and actual.—But, from the corruption of his 'nature, and the enticements of sin, he [the 'justified person] may afterwards not lead a life 'agreeable to the precepts of the gospel—and 'if he dies while he continues an impenitent 'sinner, he will not be saved, although he had 'justification in this world.'† Dr. WATERLAND, on Justification, seems to regard this as the sentiment of the Church of England.

§ 16. Setting aside names and human authority, as we ought to do, let us calmly examine the sentiment itself. There are two things of

* Refut. p. 142. † Ibid. p. 143.

primary importance, which require our attention: first, whether the justification supposed to be conferred by baptism, on *profession* of faith in the Trinity, and a *promise* of future obedience, be not a gratuitous assumption; and, secondly, whether the difficulty proposed to be obviated by this statement, may not be more satisfactorily, that is, more scripturally and rationally, removed on different principles. As to the *first* of these points, what *evidence* is there, that adults, converted from Heathenism, or persons educated among Christians without baptism, are brought into a state of justification before God, by simply professing their faith in the Trinity and promising future obedience, and being baptized? That any churches, whether primitive or modern, have acted on this presumption, can surely be no substantial argument for the rectitude of the sentiment. Primitive practice may be as wrong as a modern practice; and if antiquity be a test of truth, there is scarcely an error or absurdity, which may not be proved to be true and correct. May not a hypocritical pretender profess faith and promise obedience,—nay, be baptized, and introduced to the visible church? It is true the church ought, in the judgment of charity to esteem them as sincere in their profession and promise, and therefore in a justified state, until they give evidence to the contrary; but the omniscient God can be under no such obligation:

he sees their insincerity of profession and promise, and that their faith is dead. Surely no one without contradicting the whole tenor of holy writ, as well as many particular express declarations, can suppose that he approves, accepts, pardons and justifies those whom he knows to be insincere; nor can any thing be more adverse to scripture and piety than the notion, that baptism was ever designed to sanctify hypocrites, and to render those acceptable to God who were before detested by him?

§ 17. It is granted that the apostolic writings regard those who were admitted to the Christian church to be Christians, and partakers of all the benefits of Christianity: but on what ground? Clearly because it was charitably hoped that they believed and promised from a pure principle and a right motive. To be thus *justified*, however, by the fallible opinion of the church, is no evidence that they are so before God who searcheth the hearts. By him, such false pretenders both before and after baptism stand condemned; and their being thus introduced to the participation of gospel privileges, and outward communion with the faithful, is so far from lessening their guilt, that it rather enhances their condemnation. Doubtless when they manifest a temper and conduct incompatible with true Christianity, they lose that justification

which they had from the good opinion of the church; but they lose no justification before God, because they were never possessed of any. He saw the rottenness of their heart before it discovered itself to the eyes of men, and that through every stage they were under his righteous condemning sentence.—Whether, in any instance a person possessing evangelical sincerity and a living faith, may afterwards lose these estimable qualities, belongs to a totally different question; and the discussion of it in this place would be a premature digression. It may be sufficient to observe here, that if these qualities originate in themselves, they may certainly lose them; but if they are imparted by sovereign mercy, there are many strong reasons for concluding, that the "seed shall remain," and that their faith, however strongly assaulted, "shall not fail."

§ 18. The *second* thing that remains to be considered, is, whether the difficulty to be obviated by his Lordship's statement may not be more satisfactorily removed on different principles. His design is, doubtless, to befriend the interests of practical piety. At first view it may appear plausible, that a dread of having our justification before God, cancelled, may be a strong barrier against licentiousness; while a persuasion of the contrary opens a wide gate to

carelessness: but against this we have several considerations to offer. In the first place *every sin*, in whatever degree, is displeasing to God,—and this displeasure duly apprehended is a far stronger barrier, except with the selfish and unprincipled, who regard the pleasure or displeasure of God as only of secondary consideration. According to the one sentiment, a person will be no farther careful to please God, or to avoid sin, than to preserve his justification; according to the other, he has reason to guard against *all sin*, even the smallest. His language in the hour of temptation would be, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" In the next place, if every sin, however comparatively small, forfeits our justification, where in this world shall we find a justified person? For "there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." A sinful thought is displeasing to God,—but does every sinful thought forfeit our justified state? On this theory, the same person may have his justified state renewed and cancelled a hundred times a day! And if we lessen the condition a little, and say, "By the *indulgence* of any criminal passion, or by the neglect of any practicable duty, the state of justification is forfeited, and the offender becomes again liable to the wrath of God;" the inference is easy, that

there is no harm in 'criminal passion,'—God is not displeased with it, provided only we avoid its *indulgence*. The next clause indeed is more strict, the forfeiture being supposed to be incurred 'by the *neglect* of *any* practicable duty.' But then, what can be the tendency of this statement, but either to lower the standard of practicable duty, or to make a person despair of keeping his justified state for any one day, one hour, one minute of his life? In short, it amounts to this,—that we are no longer in a justified state, than we are in a state of sinless perfection. Let the reader judge whether such a notion does not lead rather to gloomy scepticism, than to filial and chearful piety.

§ 19. But I would observe, in the *third* place, that his Lordship seems to have overlooked the great difference there is between the requirements of the moral law under the notion of a *covenant*, and those of the same law under the notion of a *rule*. In the former capacity it can admit of nothing less than perfection of character. This Adam had before the fall, and this he lost by the very first deviation from rectitude. This also the second Adam preserved entire as a substitute; otherwise he would not have been a Saviour. A failure of obedience, would have been a failure of a federal righteousness. If any of the posterity of Adam be justified before God,

it must be by a gracious imputation of what Jesus Christ has done and suffered in our stead. Hence "he who knew no sin, was made a sin-offering for us, that we might be constituted righteous in him," according to a plan of mercy. This was the very design of his incarnation and humiliation unto death: by becoming perfect through suffering, or obtaining a perfection of righteousness in this way, he is become the author of eternal redemption and salvation. But how are we to be made partakers of this federal righteousness? It is, as the scripture testifies, by our being in Christ. "There is no condemnation (i. e. there is justification) to them who are in Christ Jesus," and the evidence of this privilege is, that we "walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." This union is the basis both of justification before God, and of life, or a spiritual principle, from Christ. "For the law of the spirit of life (the quickening power) in Christ Jesus, makes them free from the law of sin and death."

§ 20. Now the enquiry returns, what constitutes that *oneness* on account of which the imputation is made? To imagine that no special oneness at all is necessary, is extremely unreasonable; for then it would follow that every man, in whose nature Christ appeared as a perfect character, had an equal claim to his federal righ-

teousness, and justification by it. The scripture expressly says "That the righteousness," thus prepared, "is upon all them that *believe*;" and that to us also "it shall be imputed, if we *believe* on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."* From these passages, in their connection, among many others, it is plain that *faith*, (a living, not a dead and unproductive faith), constitutes a justifying union. A dead faith forms no union in the sight of God, though it may in the charitable view of the church, whose province it is to judge from explicit profession, while this is not belied by overt acts incompatible with sincerity. But "God looketh not as man looketh; man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart." This faith by which we are justified, though *our own*, is not *of ourselves*, it is "the gift of God," from whom every good gift and every perfect gift proceedeth. While the act and deed is our own, being the exercise of our own mind, will, and heart, we are constrained by every consideration of the case, from scripture testimony, from pious gratitude, and from rational analogy, to ascribe our possession of the living principle of faith, as of every other internal grace, to the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, as the

* Rom. iii. 22. iv. 24, 25.

Gift of the Mediator to the members of his mystical body. It is, therefore, of the Spirit of Christ that we are primarily united to him, and from this union the principle of faith is derived. The obligation to believe is one thing; the ability to believe, is another. The obligation arises from our possessing natural powers and a plain divine testimony; but the spiritual disposition and actual willingness from the Holy Spirit. A cordial reception of Christ as our righteousness answers the requirements of the law under the notion of a *covenant*.

§ 21. But God's holy law has other requirements under the notion of a *rule*. To have obtained that righteousness which meets the charge of a breach of original perfection, does not excuse the possessor of it from future obedience; otherwise the divine law would be nothing more than a covenant, and Adam could have been guilty of only one sin: for how could he, or any of his posterity, be a subsequent transgressor, if the law did not continue a rule to man after his breach of covenant? A deviation from the rectitude required by the law, which requirement of rectitude the very notion of a law implies, is sinful in every condition of man, whether at the fall, under the fall, or after a restoration from a condemned and depraved state. With respect to the first transgression,

compared with all subsequent ones, there is necessarily this difference, that he could not transgress the law as a rule without at the same time transgressing it as a covenant; but all his subsequent transgressions were a deviation only from the rectitude of a rule. If he was to enjoy a favour only on condition of remaining a perfect character, it is evident that the favour was completely forfeited by the first deviation from that perfection. He failed in performing that very condition on which a continuance of the favour was suspended. To insist, therefore, that any such condition now exists respecting any of the fallen race, is chargeable with as much absurdity as to require personal perfection on a condition which is already forfeited, and which, without a plan of mercy in the substitution of a perfect character, is as impossible as to recall the perfection of Adam. As Adam, consequently, could not transgress the law as a covenant of life without at the same time transgressing it as a rule of right; so neither could he, after the first transgression, violate it as a covenant,—which, for the same reason, is the case with his posterity, who can transgress it only as a rule.

§ 22. But now, by a Mediator, there is a *new covenant* of life. What was required of him, as a substitute, was sinless obedience

resembling what was required of the first Adam; —and this requirement he fulfilled: for such a Mediator and High Priest became us, "who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners." And the condition of this new covenant proposed to us, is "to believe with the heart, unto righteousness," or, in order to obtain his righteousness as our own. Now when this requirement is complied with, "we are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." The pardoned offender is not rendered lawless. A justified state is not exempt from obligation. We are, as much as Adam was, required to love God with all our heart; and seeing we are bought with a price, from this very consideration there is an additional claim on our grateful obedience, there is the most reasonable demand upon us "to glorify God with our bodies and our spirits." But if the condition of our continuance in a state of justification were the smallest deviation from rectitude, no one in this world, grown up above infancy, could be in a justified state. A failure of conformity to the law as a rule, in any respect or degree, such as a defect in loving God "with *all* our heart, with *all* our mind, with *all* our soul, and with *all* our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves," is a *sin*. If therefore every sin be a breach of covenant, and consequently a forfeiture of justification, we should in vain look

for any justified character among men, except, peradventure, at the moment of believing,—and even then, it may be justly questioned whether any person is entirely free from imperfection.

§ 23. It is now natural to enquire, what then *is* the condition of continuance in justification?—a most important question, and to which his Lordship, and every reader, has a right to demand an answer. This I shall endeavour to give "with meekness and fear." It is, in general, the continuance of that, be it what it may, which first put us in a justified state. This cannot be a personal freedom from all sin; else no one would ever be justified; nor can it be freedom from gross offences, since from these many persons who have only a dead faith, or no faith at all, are exempt. It must therefore be, the possession of that lively faith which is the inseparable effect of possessing the Spirit of Christ. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:" but "he who is in Christ Jesus, has no condemnation." When it can be truly said of any man, that he has no justifying faith, has not the Spirit of Christ, or is not united to him as the living head of his living members, then it may be said that he is not in a justified state;—but not otherwise. What persons may fancy their state to be is one thing; what it is in reality, in the

sight of God, is a totally different one. Men may deceive themselves, but they cannot deceive the omniscient God. Every man, in the sight of God, is either condemned or justified; but there are different degrees of attainment in holiness; and "whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Although Calvinists believe, from the testimony of scripture, from the wisdom of God, from the offices of Christ, and other considerations, that the living principle of faith, and the union from which it proceeds, never utterly forsakes a person thus favoured, however partially foiled in an hour of temptation, yet none, they contend, degenerated from that state of mind which indicated his justification, has a right to conclude in favour of his acceptance, further than he is conscious of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: and he who infers that he was once justified before God, though now he lives in the indulgence of known sin, has every reason to consider himself a miserable self deceiver.

§ 24. In short, a deviation from the rule of righteousness is sin, and sin displeases God; the indulgence of it provokes the holy one of Israel into anger, and such disobedience will bring on either the correction of a Father or the severity of a Judge. If they have a principle of a living faith, but are not so watchful against temptation

as they ought to be, "their transgression shall be visited with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes," but the divine "faithfulness of mercy shall be with them." Sin is not connived at, but corrected; yet, for the sake of his interceding surety, the offender is not cut down as a cumberer of the ground, nor separated from his covenant head: "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him:—my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." The backslider, if left to himself, or dealt with according to strict demerit, would fall to perdition; (and indeed the smallest sin deserves this exposure, and the cancelling of justification;) but he who quickened him when dead in sin, who gave him the spirit of repentance and faith, and who intercedes for him, in opposition to the claims of unmixed justice, renews him again unto the exercise of repentance and faith. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." The gracious interceding Surety looks upon him with an eye of reproof and compassion; and he "goes out and weeps bitterly:" the divine Head of spiritual influence to his mystical church and members, pours upon him a fresh supply of the spirit of grace and supplications, and this makes the penitent look unto him whom he has pierced, and to mourn with bitterness of spirit: and now he

cries, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.—Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.—Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

§ 25. The reader is requested to judge without prejudice, whether the statement now given be not more consonant to scripture, more worthy of the divine perfections, the character of the Saviour, and the interests of practical religion, than the notion contended for by his Lordship; *viz.* that a *dead* faith and baptism will introduce a man into a justified state, but only a *lively* faith will ensure its continuance, or recover it when lost—that the neglect of *any* practicable duty forfeits a state of justification, which may be always recovered by repentance and faith, &c. It seems, from his account, that the first justification, which is obtained by a *dead* faith, is expected to produce *sinless perfection*, under pain of forfeiture; and that the *same faith* and promise of obedience will not obtain a restoration into the *same state* of acceptance. Have we not a right to demand, why conditions so extremely different should be required for an

interest in the same benefit? If a dead faith will justify at one time, why not at another; or, if a lively faith be required for continuance, why not the same required for commencement? If a man with only a dead stock be declared in a good condition, why should not the possession of the same stock be pronounced sufficient a second, a twentieth, or a thousandth time, or why should 'the neglect of *any* practicable duty' immediately declare him a bankrupt? If, on the contrary, however, we are placed in a good and acceptable condition by partaking of the Spirit of Christ, the continuance of this participation secures the continuance of that acceptable condition. Supposing the condition of continuance to be the *exercise* of faith, that exercise must be incessant and never-failing, and to fall asleep would be to lose our acceptance with God! Whereas, if the condition be a living union to Christ, who is ever present and ever active, then "whether we wake or sleep, live or die, we are accepted of him." To him who judgeth infallibly, this is an adequate ground and evidence of the justification of our persons, though to ourselves the *evidence* must be a conscious sincerity of repenting and believing.

§ 26. There is one thing more to be observed, before we close this discussion; *viz.* that there is an important difference between

the justification of our persons, and the justification of our actions. Every sinful act, and every neglect of duty, is condemnable; but it does not follow that every *person* on account of the failure, is struck off from the list of acceptance, without involving endless absurdities—such as confounding a federal and personal righteousness—destroying the fundamental difference between a covenant and a rule of action—placing a fallen sinner in the same predicament of continuance in favour with sinless Adam—making the divine Head of influence, as such, a mere cypher in the recovery of our justification, supposed to be lost—and imagining justification and condemnation to proceed alternately in rapid succession; a succession as rapid and frequent, for ought we know, as those of individual human volitions:—now justified by a dead faith, next condemned for neglect of '*any* 'practicable duty,' then restored by sincere faith, anon condemned for another failure, and so on, it may be, ten thousand times over, till the moment of death,—and finally if '*any*' neglect attach to us at that moment, we lie under condemnation for ever! And these, I apprehend, are the genuine consequences of his Lordship's theory of Justification.—It must be owned, however, that many of the Christian fathers have been too favourable in their mode of expression to that sentiment; expressions which

the corrupt hierarchy of Rome eagerly caught up for advancing its own importance, and which an ignorant multitude as eagerly adopted, as the easiest way to justification and heaven.

SECT. III.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments concerning FAITH, *examined.*

§ 1. His Lordship's peculiar notions concerning Faith stated.
§ 2, 3. His notion concerning the Faith of Heathens, examined.
§ 4—6. That a dead Faith may rise to a lively Faith, examined.
§ 7. That Faith only will not preserve justification, examined. § 8. By his Lordship's own statements, and § 9, 10. By scriptural illustrations.
§ 11. The importance of Faith and practice deduced from their *ends* respectively.
§ 12. That Faith is not bestowed arbitrarily, examined.
§ 13. The Calvinistic view of Faith summarily explained.

§ 1. WHEN treating on this important article of the Christian doctrine, with a view to refute Calvinism, his Lordship advances some very remarkable sentiments that require examination. Among other things he supposes, That the faith of Heathens was, believing that compliance with their law was acceptable to God—that a dead faith may rise to a lively faith—that faith *only*, will not preserve justification—that faith is the gift of God, but is not bestowed arbitrarily—and that faith is the result of candour and diligence.

§ 2. 'The Gentiles were a law unto them-'selves, and their faith,' his Lordship observes,

'consisted in *believing* that a *compliance* with 'that law was acceptable to the Deity.'* It is natural to ask, what Deity? They had Moloch and Dagon, Jupiter and Mars, Apollo and Bacchus, Minerva and Venus; with innumerable others. Faith, in the acceptation of believing, it will be allowed, is giving credit to a testimony; and divine faith requires a divine testimony; but had any Deity of the Gentiles a testimony to give? If it be said that God bore a testimony to their consciences by the law within them, which they believed; it may be again asked, why should this be called faith, any more than their believing that they had passions, or that they were the subjects of hunger and thirst? Or if their consciences bore witness, and their thoughts the mean while accused or excused, what propriety is there in calling this *faith?* As well may an Atheist be called a believer, because even he cannot get rid of the suggestions of conscience; and his thoughts accuse him for doing or designing some things, or excuse him when he does or designs the contrary. And indeed, as the apostle observes, the Gentiles were (αθεοι) *atheists*, "without God in the world," though the visible effects of an invisible cause, an eternal power

* Refut. p. 102. Note.

and Godhead, rendered them without excuse for being so.

§ 3. But supposing that some of them admitted the conviction of an eternal and almighty Being, and that he was a righteous avenger of evil deeds, and was an approver of virtue; and supposing too that we admit the appellation *faith*, in reference to such conviction; what influence could a belief 'that a compliance with 'a law within them was acceptable to the 'Deity,' have on their salvation from sin and guilt? To *believe* that a compliance is *acceptable*, is one thing; but to *comply* is another. A belief which was not productive of obedience, could be nothing more than a dead faith. Must we recur again to the notion, that their dead faith, brought them into a state of acceptance with God—without baptism? If it be pleaded, that some of them may possibly have rendered as much obedience, according to the means they had, as many Christians who are possessed of a lively faith; I shall not dispute the possibility of it, but must maintain that, on the supposition, they must have derived it from him who is the Head of all spiritual influence to fallen man. How far he who has power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him, actually imparts a spiritual influence, which produces a

spirit of faith, to adult Heathens, it is not my province to determine. It is sufficient for me to know, that the Judge of the whole earth does all things right, that he "wrongeth no man in his matters," and that the methods of his mercy, as well as of his justice, are adorable. Of this however we may be sure, First, that if such favours are conferred, they must be, not only for the sake, or through the mediation, of the blessed Saviour, but also by his direct influence, and, Secondly, that wherever a spirit of faith exists, it will shew itself by believing the testimony of God in the Gospel, when fairly proposed in a language understood by its possession. As sure as any one has the Spirit of Christ, he will receive the testimony concerning him, and devote himself to be governed by his laws, in proportion as he understands it.

§ 4. It is one of his Lordship's very extraordinary sentiments, that a *dead* faith may rise to a *lively* faith. Witness his words, 'It is very 'possible that a sinful or negligent Christian 'may be awakened to a sense of his duty by 'some calamitous or extraordinary event, and 'for a time really feel a true and lively faith; 'but the impression may be effaced, and by 'yielding to temptation to sin, or by being again 'engrossed by worldly cares, he may fall from

'his justified state, without losing all belief in 'the truth of the gospel. This man's faith '*rises from a dead to a lively faith*, and after-'wards *relapses into a dead faith again.*'* A part of this statement is not controverted, *viz.* That it is 'very *possible*,' that a sinful or negligent Christian may be *awakened* to a sense of his duty; for with God all things are possible, which do not imply a contradiction. He who quickened the sinner when he was dead in trespasses, no doubt can awaken him when sinful or negligent. And this he *can* do by 'some 'calamitous or extraordinary event,' provided grace be conveyed to his heart; otherwise the rod will be lifted up in vain, and the severest discipline will be ineffectual. This also is *possible* by reading, by hearing the word of God, by the admonitions, remonstrances, or the reproofs of a friend, by musing on the goodness of God, or by other means innumerable; but none of these things operate on a free agent *mechanically*. The effect will be as the state of his mind is disposed to improve them;—and I am apprehensive that a dead faith is but ill adapted to produce a lively effect. If he has but a spark of spiritual life, though the spirit of a living faith be but as smoaking flax, these things may contribute to make the fire kindle,

* Refut. p. 160.

and to raise it into a flame: but if the life be gone, not a spark remaining, a supply of fuel will not restore it, except he be baptized with celestial fire.

§ 5. It is again granted, that many a good '*impression* may be effaced,' that the fire of affection may be less warm, and the flame of zeal grow dim;—and this by 'yielding to 'temptation,' or by being too much 'engrossed 'by worldly cares.' But that a person who was once dead to sin and alive to God, 'may fall 'from his justified state,' depends upon the good pleasure of him who his is life, his righteousness and strength, who can maintain or dissolve the union from whence his life and righteousness took their origin. And Calvinists think that such declarations as these have some weight: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."* "He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."† Indeed a total falling from the life of faith, would not imply 'losing all belief in the truth of the gospel.' Since what might be prior to possessing the life of faith, might still remain.

* John x. 27, 28. † Phil. i. 6.

§ 6. Now the question is, whether in any instance 'this man's faith rises from a *dead* to a *lively* faith.' One might think that the proper answer to this question is about as plain as would be the answer to the following, Whether water left to itself, according to the constituted laws of nature, will rise above its level? With God, indeed, all things are possible, and he who raised Lazarus from the grave, can raise the spiritually dead to life again. If his Lordship will but allow, that the giving or the restoring of the life of faith depends more on the grace of God our Saviour, than on the will of a man dead in sin, the Calvinists will not quarrel about the remaining parts of the question.

§ 7. His Lordship contends, that faith only will not *preserve* justification. These are his words: 'Faith only will not preserve a man in 'a justified state; it must be accompanied by 'works, for faith without works is dead.'* One would think it a very natural inference, that if 'faith only' will justify a man once, it will do so a second time, or as often as he needs justification,—for how can the circumstance of priority or posteriority of time affect the case? If, for instance, his believing in the Trinity and professing obedience, is sufficient at one time, why

* Refut. p. 119.

not sufficient at another? Or, if nothing less than a lively faith will do the second time, why should any thing less do at the first? If it be said, that at first baptism was added to his dead faith to make it effectual; Calvinists will reply, that they cannot admit the argument to be decided by the force of a Popish conceit: they look, (but look in vain,) for scripture and sound reason to confirm it. When however, it is said, 'Faith *only* will not preserve,' the terms may be taken two ways: first, a faith without life will not preserve; and, secondly, a lively faith without works, will not preserve. We allow the first, for good reason, because what in its nature cannot introduce us into a justified state, as before proved, cannot preserve that state. But we have some further observations to make upon the second acceptation of the phrase, viz. that a *lively* faith without *works* will not preserve justification. Candour requires us to understand his Lordship in this way; for he never would impute to us the absurdity of holding the notion of a dead faith having the efficacy of preserving us in a state into which it never introduced us. He must have known our sentiments better; nor would he have given himself so useless a trouble.

§ 8. 'Faith *only* will not preserve us.' Here several difficulties arise. First, from his Lord-

ship's own declarations, '*Faith* then stands in 'the place of righteousness, or uniform obe-'dience.'* Again, 'Repentance and faith, if 'sincere, will *in all cases* procure justification.' It is indeed subjoined 'but obedience must be 'added, to *preserve* the state of justification 'when obtained.'† This, however, increases the difficulty: for we are told that 'in reality, true 'Christian faith, and good works pleasant and 'acceptable to God, are in their own nature '*inseparable.* True faith produces good works 'as naturally as a tree produces its fruit.'‡ If sincere faith 'in all cases' will procure justification, why not procure its continuance? And if such faith 'naturally' produces good works, and both are 'inseparable,' of what use is it to warn us against the inefficacy of 'faith *only*?' We acknowledge that good works are the proper evidence to ourselves and other men of a true Christian faith; but the appearance of these works does not alter the nature of faith, any more than fruit alters the nature of the tree that bears it.

§ 9. But, secondly, what can be the *preservation* of a justified state, but the continuance of the same cause producing the same effect? His Lordship allows, that 'faith *only*, procures'

* Refut. p. 112. † Ib. p. 142. ‡ Ib. p. 160.

the favour; how is it then that the continuance of the same cause does not preserve the same effect? A good tree is not equally fruitful in all seasons, and a season may occur when the wonted fruit does not appear; shall we therefore pass the sentence of condemnation upon the tree, and pronounce it to be bad in the root, as well as accidentally bare in the branches? Or, shall we not rather continue to justify it as a good tree, and as such preserve it, notwithstanding its accidental failure, and employ suitable means to assist its fructification. But if a tree be planted in a favourable situation, under whatever promise or persuasion of its producing sweet apples, and it uniformly bears only sour crabs, we condemn it, as being different from the promise and persuasion.

§ 10. It will be said, perhaps, that the contrast to good works, are bad works, rather than no fruit. We will then change the illustration. Christian faith in the human mind, may be compared to a scion of an excellent quality, that in due time bears corresponding fruit. But if any of the other branches remain of the crab stock, these, also may bear fruit of a very different quality. Then the same observations will apply as in the former case. Blessed are those trees of righteousness whose good fruits abound to the suppression of the bad. In

another view of the same subject, "our life is hid with Christ in God." From him we derive a quickening influence and fruitfulness. And those who are in him only by profession, without a living union, he taketh away, and casteth into the fire; but the branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit; and then is our heavenly Father most glorified, when we bring forth most good fruit. In short, we may safely conclude, that whatever *procures* justification, *preserves* it; and that good works, or active holy devotedness to the will of God, are the legitimate evidence in both cases. A vital union to Christ is, in the sight of God, the only thing that *can* render us acceptable. This union is formed, on Christ's part, by his Holy Spirit; and on our part, by the spirit of faith aspiring to its divine object. But the nature of our works, shews the nature of our faith; and their degree, the degree of its prevalence.

§ 11. We do not magnify the importance of Faith at the expence of practice. Every thing should be regarded with reference to its appropriate end. The end of a testimony given is believing it; the end of a command is obeying it; the end of obedience, virtue and piety, is the chief good, which is objectively the infinite, eternal, and blessed God, and subjectively our enjoyment of him as our endless portion. The

whole of divine revelation is of the nature of a testimony from God to mankind; hence the importance of believing it without wavering: and much of this testimony is in the form of authoritative command; whence arises the importance of implicit and unreserved obedience. The end of sanctions is an unhesitating compliance: the end of benefits proposed, is a grateful reception, and of those actually conferred, a profitable improvement: the end of threatenings is abstinence from evil, and if slighted, condign sufferings. Hence Calvinistic teachers inculcate the importance both of faith and of practice; the former as the foundation, the latter as the superstructure. Not only the unbeliever, but the offender of whatever class is admonished, warned, and threatened in the name of God and our Saviour, "who will come with flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." They are in the habit of proclaiming to their hearers that "with God there is no respect of persons," and "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap;" that "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." I believe they are not behind any other denomination of Christians, in reproving sinners of every class, and inculcating personal and relative duties. Look at their societies, their families, their tempers, their conversations, their

loyalty, their charitable contributions, their exertions to spread the scriptures, and to instruct the ignorant, to promote the peace of society and the happiness of mankind—view them through an unprejudiced medium, and "by their *fruits* ye shall *know* them."

§ 12. His Lordship avows, that faith is the *gift* of God; but that he does not bestow it arbitrarily. While commenting on the Church Article on Free Will, which states that man "cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works, to *faith* and calling upon God," he observes respecting true faith, as contradistinguished from 'a bare 'belief in the divine mission of Christ,' that 'It is indeed the gift of God, for without God's 'assistance, no man can possess it; but it is a 'gift not bestowed arbitrarily, capriciously, or 'irrespectively.'* That the infinitely wise God should bestow a favour, or do any thing else, capriciously, without reason, or irrespectively, without a wise reference to a worthy end, is out of the question; for his Lordship must be too equitable to impute to Calvinists, a sentiment which they utterly abhor. But they do avow the sentiment that his gifts, as distinguished from rewards, are bestowed *arbitrarily*, or accord-

* Refut. p. 54.

ing to his sovereign pleasure;—and faith among other gifts. "He has mercy on whom he will have mercy." And has he not a right "to do what he will with his own?" Should our eye be evil, because he bestows gifts upon others where there is no ground of claim? Has he not a right to impart "gifts unto men, yea to the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them?" Is there no ground of reason and wisdom in conferring them, beside the worthiness of the receiver? Distributive justice, indeed, in rewards and punishments, is exercised 'respectively.' Its measure of operation is founded on the worthiness or demerit of its object. But it is the prerogative of benevolence, grace, and mercy, to overlook worthiness in their objects; and the measure of their exercise is adequately found in supreme wisdom. If man since the fall "cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works, to *faith*,"—and if God *give* him a supernatural principle from whence "faith and calling upon God" arises, though before "dead in trespasses and sins," where is the ground of equitable remonstrance? The receiver, it is self-evident, can have none: nor can the unworthy have any. And as to the Giver, his own good pleasure, directed by a depth of wisdom to us unfathomable, ought to exclude all cavil from his creatures. In short, though he rewards according to the measure of obedience; he gives

in a manner, in a degree, and in a season, worthy of himself, and far beyond our deservings.

§ 13. Once more, it is asserted, that 'faith is the result of candour and diligence.' Thus his Lordship reasons: 'The Bereans were commended, "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so;" and it is immediately added, "therefore many of them believed:" hence it appears, that the faith of the Bereans was the result of the candour with which they listened to the preaching of the apostle, and of the diligence with which they enquired into the evidences of the gospel.'* The question is not, whether the Bereans manifested candour and diligence, nor yet whether this was commendable; for upon this there can be but one sentiment. It is likewise agreed, that their candour and diligence preceded their explicit avowal of the gospel. Nay we may go a step further, and admit that their faith in part resulted from these estimable particulars. But were the Bereans less commendable on supposition that they were inspired with candour, and divinely excited to diligence? "They received the word with all readiness of mind;" but this is no evidence that they were

* Refut. p. 24.

not graciously influenced to do so. The question is, whether their faith was the result exclusively of their candour and diligence; or whether *these* were not the fruit of an influence from above?

§ 14. Faith in the sense of *believing*, implies several things. First, a testimony; and a divine faith must have a divine testimony, in order to deserve that appellation: secondly, a knowledge of the thing declared, or a sufficient acquaintance with the language in which the message is delivered: thirdly, a freedom of will; so that there is no compulsion, constraint, or influence whatever from God to believe a false testimony; though he may in equity and judgment *leave* the wicked to their own delusions "to believe a lie;" and a freedom also from restraint in the exercise of will, when truth is to be credited, is implied: fourthly, a *disposition*, or principle; and the nature of faith, as either dead or living, will be according to the defective or efficient principle. If the disposition be not spiritually alive, the most awful or exhilarating testimony will beget but a dead faith; but where the disposition is alive to God, or divinely spiritual, the testimony will beget a lively belief. Such a disposition will shew itself in various ways beside believing; and among others by 'candour and diligence,' readiness of

mind to receive truth, and an impartial search into its evidences. Admitting then, that faith is the "result of candour and diligence," these also are themselves the result of gracious influence. Calvinists are far from supposing that candour in listening, and diligence of enquiry into the evidences of the gospel are of no use; on the contrary, they consider them of great use. But they cannot consistently draw the conclusion, that the disposition itself from whence they spring, needs no previous divine influence to produce that result;—any more than they can infer that there may be an effect without any adequate cause.

SECT. IV.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments concerning GOOD WORKS, examined.

§ 1. The Bishop's contradictory statements.
§ 2. His comment on St. Paul's Faith without Charity or Good Works, examined.
§ 3—5. His opinion that we may recommend ourselves to the favour and mercy of God, and render ourselves worthy the mediation of Christ, examined. § 6, 7. The imprudence of using such language.
§ 8—11. Ministerial addresses employed by Calvinists, described and vindicated. § 12. His Lordship's view of the importance of recommending Good Works, considered, with an appeal to the actual *effects* of different modes.

§ 1. ON the subject of Good Works we have several statements made in his Lordship's "Refutation," which require no small degree of ingenuity even plainly to reconcile them. In one place we read thus: 'Indeed that there is 'no *necessary connexion* between faith or belief 'and good works, even according to St. Paul, 'who is the great advocate for the doctrine 'of justification by faith, is evident from 'a passage in his first Epistle to the Co-'rinthians—"Though I have all faith so that I 'could remove mountains, and have not charity, 'I am nothing." Could St. Paul have described 'faith in stronger terms—or could he have 'inculcated the necessity of *good works* in

'stronger language?'* In another place we read: 'In reality, true Christian faith, and good 'works pleasant and acceptable to God, are in 'their own nature *inseparable*. True faith pro-'duces good works as naturally as a tree pro-'duces its fruit.'† In a *note* we have this explanation: 'Faith, or the general belief of 'the truth of Christianity, is not necessarily 'connected with good works. True Christian 'faith and good works are inseparable.' Again: 'The ministers of our church are unquestionably 'authorised by our Articles to speak of faith, as 'signifying a firm reliance upon the merits of 'Christ for salvation, necessarily productive of 'good works.'‡

§ 2. Now, if St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, intended 'a true Christian 'faith,' how can his Lordship's remarks upon it be reconciled with his other declarations, that faith and good works are inseparable: and if St. Paul did not intend such faith, but some other—as a general belief of the 'truth of 'Christianity,' or, the faith by which miracles were performed, which appears from the connexion to be the case—of what use are the observations upon it? Need any one to be assured by proof—a professed appeal to scrip-

* Refut. p. 130. † Ib. p. 160. ‡ Ib. p. 163.

ture evidence—that a faith which no one expects to produce good works, has no 'necessary 'connexion' with them? At least, did any Calvinist suppose any such connexion? His Lordship asks, 'could St. Paul have described *faith* 'in stronger terms?' What faith? The terms indeed are strong to describe the faith of miracles; but the following are stronger to indicate justifying or saving faith. "Faith *unfeigned*." "The faith of God's elect." Faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." "*Precious* faith." Faith which "overcometh the world." "Most *holy* faith." That by which a man is justified, by which his heart is purified, and his person sanctified; by which he has access to God, by which he has power, or privilege, to become a son of the Most High; that by which Christ dwells in his heart, by which he offers a sacrifice acceptable to God, and walks with him:—these are superior qualities, and more excellent effects, than those of which St. Paul speaks in the passage above referred to.

§ 3. We are again told, That we may *recommend* ourselves to God by good words. 'Men, 'as they now are, are not capable of perfect 'obedience, but they are capable of endea-'vouring to attain it. Such an endeavour is their 'indispensable duty; and although it may not

'in all instances, and on every occasion be 'effectual, it is humbly hoped that it may be '*sufficient to recommend them to the favour of* '*God*, forasmuch as what their infirmity lacketh, 'Christ's justice hath supplied.' His Lordship avows, that a minister of the Established Church ought not to be blamed for 'hoping that his 'congregation will *recommend themselves to the* '*favour of God* by a regular attendance upon 'divine ordinances, and an uniform practice of 'religious duties'—and for 'urging the neces-'sity of *recommending ourselves to the mercy of* '*God*, and *rendering ourselves worthy the medi-*'*ation of Jesus Christ* by an holiness of living 'and by an abhorrence of vice.'

§ 4. That good works are pleasant and acceptable to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, is language that any Christian may approve, but the phrases above printed in Italics appear inconsistent with the economy of grace, and not a little offensive to Christian humility, especially in the connexion in which they are introduced. How much more suitable and pious the language and sentiment of the patriarch Jacob, "*I am not worthy* of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant." Or of the Centurion, "*I am not worthy* that thou shouldest come under my roof."

§ 5. As words acquire different acceptations, according to their connexion, so we find the term "worthy" denoting different things. Christians are exhorted, to "walk worthy of their vocation," — "worthy of the Lord," — "worthy of God." In such phrases, the obvious meaning is, that they conduct themselves in a manner suitable to their privileges and relations. In this sense we may say, that a man conducts himself *worthily* in certain circumstances; as Solomon said of Adonijah, "If he will shew himself a *worthy* man, there shall not a hair of him fall to the earth." Sometimes the term "worthy" denotes deserving; as when a man is said to be "worthy of death," or "worthy of punishment,"—or, when it is said of God that he is "worthy to be praised;" and of the divine Saviour, that he is "worthy to receive glory and power, &c." Again, when it is said that "the labourer is *worthy* of his reward;" that the saints "shall walk in white, for they are *worthy*," it implies not only suitableness but also a kind of desert. Where there is a stipulation, either tacit or expressed; on performance of the condition, the notion of desert is attached to the reward stipulated, however unmeritorious might be the performance independent of promise.

§ 6. But in which of these acceptations, or

in what other, are we to understand the phrase which his Lordship has undertaken to vindicate? Is there *any* sense in which it can be vindicated, when addressed to a *mixed* audience, in which it is more than probable there are many unconverted persons, or in a publication addressed to professing Christians promiscuously, the far greater part of whom have little more of Christianity than the name? To urge on the *unconverted* the necessity of 'rendering themselves 'worthy of the mediation of Jesus Christ by 'holiness of living and an abhorrence of vice," has a direct tendency to delude them. It tends to foster pride and presumption. Pride, because it leads them to self-sufficiency, rather than to "repentance towards God," and self-abhorrence before him, on account of their multiplied offences. This was not the method our Saviour took in dealing with the unconverted and self-righteous. I said also that such language tends to foster presumption in the unconverted; because it leads them to conclude that they are in a justified state, or converted already. Instead of this they should be alarmed of their danger, until signs of contrition and some unequivocal fruits of repentance are supposed to shew themselves. To urge a profane swearer, a drunkard, a gambler, a fornicator, and the like, many of whom attend public worship, and

some of them read a book of fashionable divinity,—to 'render themselves worthy the me-'diation of Jesus Christ by holiness of living, &c.' is an exhortation egregiously misplaced, and calculated to subvert the gospel order. The address would not probably be disliked by the ignorant, the proud, and presumptuous; but for that very reason it is the more likely to delude them, as exciting hopes of success in a way which will never be realized, and which in the common order of the divine procedure, never can be. Even the truly pious, knowing the address to be promiscuous, so as to include the impenitent and pharisaic, would be rather grieved than edified: and the more they knew of themselves, and of the spiritual design of the scriptures, to humble the sinner, to stain the glory of all flesh, to exalt the Saviour "as all in all" in the work of a sinner's acceptance before God, the less could they approve of it in such connexion.

§ 7. The phrase 'to *recommend* themselves 'to the *favour*' or, 'to the *mercy* of God,' in the same promiscuous manner, is equally objectionable, and for the same reasons. They have enough of native pride and of habitual presumption to fancy, that by a few pharisaic endeavours, which to them indeed is a mighty effort, they are sure to obtain the favour of God: Whereas

the axe should be laid to the root of their sin; the aim should be to humble them, to make them feel their unworthiness, their guilt, their exposure to the holy vengeance of God as transgressors; to excite them to pray for mercy, "to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near." That 'endeavouring to attain perfect obedience,' is every man's indispensable duty, is freely admitted; but to urge this promiscuously on men, because they bear the name of Christians, though full of sinful lusts and passions, is "zeal without knowledge," because as proposed to them, it is duty misplaced,—as much out of place, as would be the duty of an adult to be baptized, and to partake of the Lord's supper, previous to repentance and faith: for though it is the "indispensable duty" of every man in a Christian country who has not been baptized, to submit to that ordinance; yet to urge this directly and promiscuously, without insisting on the previous requisites, would be the ready way to profane a divine institution, to multiply hypocrites and pharisees, and to ruin the honour and purity of the Christian church.

§ 8. Habitual transgressors, then, should be alarmed of their danger, by shewing them the error of their ways; reproved, and convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; in-

formed of the odious nature and ruinous consequences of sin, and of their own sins particularly; and assured, from the highest authority, that if they repent not, they shall perish, and if they believe not the gospel-record from the heart, they shall be condemned. While so employed, the preacher, or the practical writer, may hope, that the Holy Spirit by his gracious influence will succeed his humble and faithful efforts. If not, he has delivered his own soul; but if his message have the desired effect, or if he have room to suppose it, he describes the state of such persons, and sets before them the gospel remedy. Like a skilful physician, he adapts his prescription to the nature of the complaint, and the circumstances of the patient. The other method, which prescribes remedies and regimens to all alike, without a proper discrimination of diseases and circumstances, and without observing the symptoms, is *empiricism* of the most dangerous kind.

§ 9. When there is good reason to conclude that persons are the subjects of "godly sorrow that worketh repentance not to be repented of," let them be instructed in the exercise of *faith in Christ* as "the end of the law and the prophets," as the great ordinance of God for righteousness to every one that believeth with the heart, as "the *way*" to the Father, "the *truth*"

of the promises and types, and "the *life*" everlasting. "He that has the Son hath life;" the life of righteousness, the life of holiness, and the promise of the life of glory. Let him be clearly instructed, that true faith receives the divine testimony on the authority of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour from sin, as well as from future misery; that it implies a firm trust and confidence in him as the divine prophet, priest, and king; and an unreserved surrender of the soul and body, in life and death, to his disposal. Let him now be directed to "live by the faith of the Son of God," who loved him, and gave himself for him; to walk worthy of so exalted a relation and privilege; to abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul's welfare and comfort, yea, from all appearance of evil; to run the race that is set before him, looking unto Jesus, and for that purpose to lay aside every weight, and every besetting sin. Let him now be exhorted not to be weary in well-doing, but to maintain the profession of his faith without wavering, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience; to be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, being assured that his labour, his work of faith and labour of love, shall not be in vain in the Lord. Let him now be reminded of the

greatness of gospel privileges, in order to awaken his gratitude.

§ 10. Grace, however, in its highest attainment, does not, cannot alter the nature of sin. It is still the abominable thing which the Lord hateth. Hence, thanksgiving for past deliverance from the guilt and dominion of sin, should be accompanied with watching unto prayer for assisting grace, with all perseverance, and that a belief of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, will save no one without *actually persevering* in the Christian course of obedience. He should recollect that he is in an enemy's country, that if left to himself he is unstable as water, that he is every moment in danger of backsliding, of grieving the Spirit of God, and wounding his own soul. He may profitably call to mind, that many high sounding professors have been apostatized to their eternal ruin, and that he has no certainty of being chosen to eternal life, or of enjoying future happiness, but by persevering in the way of holy obedience, — for Christ is become the author of eternal salvation to them who obey him, and to them only: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." While he is often reminded of his own weakness, he is as often directed to the strong

for strength, to be obtained in the way of duty. This is the true Christian: he has been convinced of sin by the law of God, which is holy, just and good; he has confided in the merits and righteousness of Christ; old sinful courses and habits are past away, and the whole soul in its views, its judgment, conclusions, and the direction of its passions, is become new; he trusts in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh, and loves him in sincerity; he casts off the works of darkness, and puts on the armour of light, walking honestly and decently as in the day, forgetting past attainments, so as not to trust in them, he presses forward to the prize of his high calling; he sincerely endeavours to do all things, whatsoever Christ has commanded, and by gracious encouragements, has an eye to the recompence of reward. But after all, he reckons himself an unprofitable servant. He renounces all merit and worthiness of his own, rejoicing only in Christ Jesus, the Mediator and Surety of the new covenant; that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. Standing by faith on the rock of ages, he rejoices in hope of the glory of God, but with holy fear and trembling, while contemplating his own weakness and insufficiency, or if dealt with in strict justice, according to his hourly failures. "Shouldest thou, Lord, mark iniquity,

O Lord, who shall stand? But with thee there is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared." "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

§ 11. I make no apology to the reader for dwelling so much upon this point; especially as his Lordship gives a very different account of Calvinism. And as he is pleased to say, that those who are called Evangelical ministers 'not only delude their unlearned 'congregations, and encourage vice and immo-'rality among their followers, but they really 'delude themselves, and fall into opinions and 'assertions totally inconsistent with the spirit 'of our holy religion,'—that 'the manner in 'which they perform the duties of their minis-'try, both public and private, is injudicious 'and mischievous in the extreme,'—and that 'the dangerous tendency of their tenets and 'practice cannot be exposed too frequently, or 'with too much earnestness,'—it seemed requisite to give the reader an opportunity to form his own judgment, which of the two methods is most conformable to the sacred oracles, and most conducive to the interests of real Christianity.

§ 12. His Lordship dwells much on the importance of "Good Works," and of the Clergy

insisting upon them as the condition of our salvation. Certainly good works are very good things; but among what congregations are they actually found to the greatest extent, and in the greatest variety? If those of the Evangelical Clergy be candidly compared with those of the gentlemen whom his Lordship defends in opposition to them, they need not shrink at the comparison. Where shall we find most devotion, punctuality in attending divine ordinances, family worship, catechising the young and ignorant, visiting the poor, the widow and the fatherless, abstinence from the schools of levity and vice, charitable contributions, reformation of manners, order in society, and an awakening concern to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling? If their hearers be more inclined to frequent circles of dissipation and folly, the card table, the ball, the assembly, the play, the opera, or the horse-race; if they are more addicted to the jovial board, or the deceitful glass, to delight in theatrical exhibitions, novels and romances, to frequent political clubs and spouting societies, to utter profane oaths, and on trivial occasions to take the most holy name in vain; if they are more given to pursue their diversions on the Lord's day, or less conscientious in keeping it holy in religous exercises; if they are more lax in observing the relative duties of

parents and children, masters and servants; if they are more cruel to men or brutes, or less chaste and temperate, honest and industrious—let them by all means be condemned in the comparison. If otherwise, the following admonition may be seasonably remembered: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

Chap. III.

AVOWED SENTIMENTS OF THE BISHOP ON REDEMPTION, AND PREDESTINATION, EXAMINED.

Sect. I.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on Redemption, examined.

§ 1, 2. The subject stated.

§ 3. The revealed character of God. § 4, 5. The actual state of mankind. § 6. A revelation of the divine character to sinners. § 7. Though under no obligation in justice, it became his mercy to do this. § 8. The foundation of the gospel call. § 9. What is required of the sinner. § 10. God's right to influence the heart. § 11. The exercise of this right, no hardship upon any. § 12, 13. The grounds of obligation to obey the gospel. § 14—16. This point further discussed.

§ 17. The *price* of Redemption. § 18. Redemption itself. § 19. The *design* of God in the sacrifice of Christ. § 20. As a Governor; and § 21. As a Sovereign. § 22. Though this price is an adequate basis of reconciliation; yet § 23. None will be reconciled to God until they are divinely influenced.

§ 24. Calvin's view of Redemption. § 25. That the *benefits* of Christ's passion extend to the whole human race; and § 26. That every man is *enabled* to attain salvation, examined. § 27—28. That the remedy is of equal extent with the evil, examined.

§ 1. Under this head we are taught by his Lordship, that the benefits of Christ's passion extend to the *whole human race*—and that *universal righteousness and pardon* are the effects of Christ's obedience. As most terms are capable of different acceptations, as already shewn under

the foregoing discussion, according to the connexion in which they stand, it is not my present design so much to controvert the use of the general expressions 'the whole human race,' and 'universal righteousness and pardon,' as to examine the sentiment intended to be conveyed by them in their present situation. For this purpose, it will be proper to produce the passages themselves. 'The doctrine of universal Redemption, namely, that the benefits of Christ's passion extends to the *whole human race;* or, that every man is *enabled* to attain salvation through the merits of Christ, was *directly* opposed by CALVIN, who maintained, that God from all eternity decreed that certain individuals of the human race should be saved, and that the rest of mankind should perish everlastingly, without the *possibility* of attaining salvation.'* Again, 'It is natural to conclude, that the *remedy, proposed* by a Being of infinite power and mercy, would be commensurate to the evil; and therefore as the evil operated instantly in producing the corruption of Adam's nature, which was soon transmitted to his offspring, we may infer that all, who were to partake of that corrupt nature, were to partake also of the appointed remedy.—All nations of the earth, past, present, and to come,

* Refut. p. 184.

'without any exception or limitation, shall be 'blessed in the promised Messiah, that is, for 'his sake, and through his mediation.'*—'Uni-'versal sin and condemnation were the conse-'quence of Adam's disobedience, and universal '*righteousness* and *pardon* the effect of Christ's 'obedience.'†

§ 2. A great number of passages are also introduced to prove, that 'in the New Testament, 'every expression which can denote *universality* 'is applied to the merits and sacrifice of Christ.'‡ This is readily admitted,—but the interpretation of them must be such as not to contradict, but to harmonize with other passages equally plain, and with the general tenor of scripture: for as we believe that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," we must admit that there *is* a perfect agreement between the parts, without any real discrepancy of meaning, while it is equally certain, that there is in reality a harmonizing principle. I shall, therefore, in the first place, produce what appears to me to possess that character; and, in the next place, examine his Lordship's declarations on the subject.

§ 3. In my apprehension, the harmonizing principle is found in the *revealed character of God*,

* Refut. p. 185, 186. † Ib. p. 189. ‡ Ib. p. 187.

in connexion with the *actual state of mankind.* Without just views of these two points properly compared, we are always in danger of verging to opposite extremes, and of losing sight of the "golden mean." Now the revealed character of God, in reference to mankind, is that of a gracious sovereign, on the one hand; and that of an equitable governor, on the other. Both these are alike essential. According to the former, "he worketh all things," worthy of him, "according to the counsel of his own will," he creates, preserves, new-creates, adorns, and glorifies; all which are worthy of his goodness, wisdom and mercy. According to the latter, he rules in righteousness, and does nothing but what is right: his laws are holy, the obligation of conformity to them is founded in equity and truth. The physical powers of man are adequate to what is required, if properly employed; and when not so employed, the fault is exclusively in himself.

§ 4. The next thing to be considered, is the actual state of mankind. With all Christians, who hold the necessity of Redemption by a mediator, it is an acknowledged fact, that mankind are in a state of apostacy, or, that "man is very far gone from original righteousness;" and, in consequence of this apostacy, that "man is of his own nature inclined to evil." But no

defection or *infection* of our nature, deprives man either of his physical powers, or of his uncontrolled freedom to act according to the dictates of his own mind: and the obligation to act aright, therefore, continues unimpared. Were it possible for apostacy from rectitude to exonerate man from obligation, this most absurd consequence would follow, *viz.* that a creature could at any time by an act of rebellion render himself lawless, or, "without law to God;" and, of course, place himself beyond the bounds of divine jurisdiction!

§ 5. Notwithstanding the sinfulness of mankind, they have a capability of enjoying the chief good, God all-sufficient; and they continue under obligation to *seek* that good. Possessed of understanding and free will, they are bound to choose the best object within the circle of their knowledge, adapted to promote their moral improvement and future happiness. But as man could never possibly recover his original righteousness, any more than he could recall a past transaction, and the sanction of the law continued in force—hence the necessity of a substitute in a plan of redeeming mercy. As the Equitable Governor required his law and government to be respected and honoured, without which they must be regarded as unmeaning cyphers; the Gracious Sovereign found a method of

effecting this by a wonderful substitution. "What the law could not do, in that it was *weak* through the *flesh*" (i. e. incapable of effecting, on account of our depraved state,) "God, sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh," (i. e. such likeness as was needful for a substitute) "and for sin," (i. e. a sin-offering) "condemned sin in the flesh;" (i. e. made satisfaction to justice, in our nature:) "that the righteousness of the law" (i. e. what the law required, whether moral or ceremonial, as the ground of imputation,) "might be fulfilled in us:" by our appropriation of it on the terms proposed for justification. And the proper evidence, the genuine fruit of such privilege, is "walking not after the flesh but after the spirit.."*

§ 6. Men after the fall, became vain in their imaginations, giving themselves up to sinful indulgencies and idolatry. Hence God raised up witnesses, to testify his abhorrence of their crimes, and their desert of punishment, accompanied with exhibitions of mercy, in virtue of the great atonement to the penitent and believing. The requisitions of the supreme ruler of men were inculcated, the sanctions of his government were adapted to their circumstances, and preachers of righteousness were invested with

* Rom. viii. 3, 4.

his authority, and "moved by the Holy Ghost," to proclaim his righteous and gracious will. The settled plan of redemption was gradually revealed, until by the apostles it was set in the light of open day. Now, the whole of that revelation which was intended for the use of future ages, is contained in the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, which a gracious providence has wonderfully preserved.

§ 7. Though God was under no antecedent obligation in justice, as the equitable Governor, to give mankind a revelation of his will, or to form a plan of redemption; yet, having formed such plan as a gracious Sovereign, it became his wisdom and mercy to announce it. Therefore "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."* This great salvation "at the first began to be spoken by the Lord," but afterwards "was confirmed by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."† And now the gospel of salvation, the message of reconciliation from God to

* Heb. i. 1, 2. † Heb. ii. 3, 4.

man, is commanded to be proclaimed "to all nations" for the obedience of faith.

§ 8. The foundation of the gospel call to evangelical repentance for the remission of sins, and to cordial faith in Christ for justification, is "Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" "who was made sin" (i. e. a sin offering) "for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God" (i. e. constituted righteous by the righteousness which God has provided) "in him" who is "the Lord our righteousness." This message of reconciliation, "to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, without imputing their trespasses unto them," was the great means of conversion in the apostolic days, and has been ever since. By this, "God caused them to triumph in every place." It is a message worthy of God; of sovereign (i. e. arbitrary) grace, in its provision; and of his equitable government, in the manner of dispensing it.

§ 9. Man, in every stage of his existence, being indispensably obliged to obey the call of God, who is incapable of proposing inequitable terms of compliance, requires of every one to whom the message is addressed, unreserved submission; "to shake off his sins by repentance," with the promise of pardon, and to

"submit to the righteousness of God" by faith for acceptance: and as mankind are already under the sentence of condemnation for the breach of divine law, both as a covenant and as a rule; by their refusal of the appointed plan of mercy, their condemnation is not only confirmed, but also aggravated. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

§ 10. Notwithstanding this general provision, God has not relinquished his right of access to the human heart, "to turn it as rivulets of water." He can make it hunger and thirst after righteousness, and direct it to himself as the source of its happiness, while the will is left perfectly free in its choice. Though man in his sinful depravity has no claim upon God for any supernatural influence, God must relinquish his essential character of a gracious sovereign, before he can give up his right of influencing the hearts of men, under the direction of infinite wisdom. He is gracious and merciful in proposing conditions so advantageous to the fallen creature; and who shall say to him "What doest thou?" if he proceed still further with some, and open their hearts, and shine into their minds, and implant in them the spirit of faith? How can he, in this, be unjust to others, while all are under

the same condemnation? Has he not a sovereign (or arbitrary) right to confer his favours on whom he pleases, when all alike are destitute of just claim?

§ 11. If it be urged, that this distinction in favour of some bears hard upon others, I ask, how, and why? There would be some force in the objection, if they were willing to comply with the terms proposed, and God unwilling: but if he is infinitely gracious and sincere in the terms proposed, and urges them with promises "exceeding great and precious;" if he puts no hindrance of any kind in the way, but removes innumerable stumbling-blocks and difficulties; "are not his ways equal, and their ways unequal?" May he not say to them, as he said of old to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the men of Judah, "Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"* No one can question that it was in the right and power of a gracious sovereign, to take away from that people "the heart of stone, and to give them a heart of flesh"—to "put his fear in their hearts" and

* Isa. v. 4.

"his Holy Spirit within them," that they might "not depart from him"—without depriving him of his essential character of supreme Benefactor. Yet this did not exculpate them, because they had every requisite to constitute their obligation to comply;—otherwise, what meaning can there be in those and similar expostulations? To suppose that the restoration of a spiritual principle, once possessed, but since forfeited and lost, is the basis of moral obligation, is a sentiment fraught with endless absurdities,—though this, however, is not the place to point them out.

§ 12. Every one to whom the gospel is addressed is under obligation to seek the blessings it proposes, as well as to obey the precepts it contains;—such as, remission of sin, by repentance; acceptance into divine favour, by faith; gracious assistance, by prayer; holy conformity to Jesus Christ, by the use of all appointed means; and everlasting life, by walking in the ways of wisdom and universal obedience. These blessings flow through Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And were there no sense in which Christ "gave himself a ransom" for all those who are morally obliged to seek these blessings for his sake, I acknowledge that there would not be an adequate basis for their obligation to do so. If Jesus Christ, in

no sense, lived and died for their sake, how can they be obliged to seek these blessings for his mediation sake? Without adequate means, or objective sufficiency of merit, ready to be laid to their account on compliance, how could they be consistently exhorted to seek them?—since it is unworthy of God to propose to them, on any terms, what was in no sense intended for them. It is idle to say, that they are obliged to obey the command of God, until it can be shewn that he requires men to believe a falsehood. I know it has been observed, that God requires no man to believe that Christ died for him, in particular; but for sinners. But if he died for sinners indefinitely, is not each individual included in that indefinite number? And if by "sinners" be meant a definite number, how can *every* sinner to whom the gospel comes, be laid under an indefinite obligation, to seek these blessings for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered?

§ 13. These considerations, among many others, constrain me to regard the blessed Saviour, in the whole of his mediatorial undertaking, as the great ordinance of God, proposed to mankind without limitation, *for the sake of whom* they are encouraged to seek all the blessings they require. If they need an atoning sacrifice, a justifying righteousness, in short,

a perfect meritorious character as their substitute; these blessings are proposed to the destitute sinners indefinitely, and consequently to *them.* If it be said, that the proposal is made to those who *feel* their need, and on this condition, IF they experience their case to be miserable, and sincerely desire to obtain the blessing: it is granted, that there are special encouragements to such characters,—as in our Lord's sermon on the mount: but how can others be threatened for rejecting what was never, in any sense, intended for them? If it be again urged, that no sinner *knows* but that Christ died for him, or, does not know but he is included in the atonement made; I reply, does God require the ignorance of his creatures as the basis of his government? or, is it worthy of his character to make it the ground of human obligation?

§ 14. The question is not, whether special promises are made to persons under certain gracious exercises of mind; but whether any impenitent and unbelieving persons are condemned, finally condemned, for not accepting what God graciously offers, or seeking to obtain gospel blessings, through the mediation and meritorious sufferings of Christ. If none were, in *any* sense, designed for those who eventually perish, how can they be said to reject them? Or, how can they be condemned

for not seeking an impossibility,—and an impossibility too, founded in the appointment of God, and not merely in their own impotence?

§ 15. The atoning sacrifice of Christ, his sufferings, bloodshedding, and death, make a very prominent part of the apostolic writings. These being the substance and reality, to which all the typical sacrifices under the Old Testament dispensation referred, nothing could be more proper and important, than the stress laid upon them by the apostles. But surely, the Redeemer's incarnation and obedience, without which there could have been no atoning sacrifice, must be equally important and necessary in themselves, nor indeed can I perceive any good reason, why *every* part of the Saviour's undertaking should not be considered as equally essential to our Redemption;—and I would humbly propose it to consideration, whether every part of his substitution be not of the same character and extent? Why should one part be more limited than another? If his death be limited, why not his obedience and incarnation? If he assumed the nature of mankind indefinitely, why not their sorrows? If he obeyed the law without limitation, why not suffer the penalty threatened by it, to an equal extent? And if his mediatorial obedience unto death,

being of infinite worth, admitted of no increase or diminution; on what principle can we say, that the atoning merits admitted of any? Is it conceivable, that by a supposed increase or diminution of *objects* ultimately saved, his incarnation; conformity to the law, or suffering at the hand of justice, could have been otherwise, than they were? Can we, even in thought, add to, or diminish from infinite worth?

§ 16. It has been said, that the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for all, had it been the design of God to include them. Is not this, however, a virtual acknowledgement, that the limitation is not in the sacrifice itself, but in the objects? If the atoning sacrifice were even *capable* of any diminution or limitation, for that very reason it would not be commensurate to the demands of justice, and infinite perfection. What law and justice required was a person of infinite worth in human nature, and that nature to become a sacrifice without spot or blemish; less was not sufficient, and more was not necessary,—irrespective entirely of the number of objects. As the sun is neither diminished nor increased on account of the blindness or the sight, the increase or diminution, of terrestrial inhabitants; so the sun of righteousness, in his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, merits, atonement, righteousness, and federal perfec-

tion, knows no diminution and increase, on account of the objects, as either many or few, who are ultimately benefited by him. To suppose that the design of God respecting a limited number, who shall be finally happy, can alter the nature of the sacrifice itself, or even the extent of its intrinsic efficacy, seems highly derogatory both to God and the Redeemer.

§ 17. It does not appear to me, that we are authorized by scripture to regard the sacrifice of Christ as our redemption itself, so much as that by which we have redemption; or, *with which* we are, or may be redeemed. It is the meritorious cause, the grand means, the inestimable price, and the divine foundation of our Redemption. And so are his incarnation, and his perfect obedience, as well as his death. It is that without which there was no remission, no justification, no eternal salvation. It is a foundation of infinite worth, and of unbounded extent, both in itself considered, and as the medium of moral government conducted by a merciful sovereign and an equitable ruler and judge.

§ 18. Redemption, properly speaking, and in scripture usage, is deliverance *from* something, which must needs be effected by some *means*. Thus Israel was redeemed *from* Egyp-

tian bondage *by* miraculous power; the captive is released *from* confinement *by* price, exchange, or force: and the church of Christ is redeemed *from* all evil, guilt, sin, satan, and hell, *by* the acts of Christ, his federal engagement, incarnation, spotless obedience, his voluntary sufferings, bloodshedding, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, the power of his Spirit, and his mighty energy at the resurrection. The *price*, or meritorious cause, was his humiliation; by virtue of which, in his exalted state, he actually redeems by his power. And all the members of his mystical body, from the beginning, were redeemed by divine power on the credit of that humiliation unto death of the promised Messiah. No sinner, therefore, can be properly said to be *redeemed* until he is personally delivered from some enemy or evil, by the interposition of an adequate price, and the exertion of an adequate power. Price without power, is but a preparation, provision, or means, without any effect or saving benefit; and power without a price, is not worthy of justice or wisdom, the holiness of God's nature or the honour of his moral government.

§ 19. Here it is proper to notice the *design* of God in the appointment of an atoning sacrifice. And for illustrating this important point, it appears to me of great use to recollect the

twofold character of God, that of an equitable governor, and that of an arbitrary dispenser of benefits; in other words, a Judge and a Sovereign. In both characters God is supreme; having none above him, in whatever capacity he acts. The reader therefore should be aware, that I do not use the terms *sovereign* and *sovereignty*, as synonymous with supreme and supremacy. In all my discussions on these subjects, I consider sovereignty, when applied to the supreme Being, as expressive of the arbitrary pleasure of a *benefactor;* because in no other capacity can he exercise arbitrary pleasure. He is supreme in the exercise of his justice, in judgments and punishments; but not arbitrary, or without a just cause, or demerit in the object. When he acts as supreme ruler and judge, his proceedings are founded in equity; but when he acts as a sovereign, his proceedings are founded in favour, dispensed with wisdom.

§ 20. As it is evident from the whole tenor of scripture, and from the nature of the case, that God acts in these twofold characters towards his rational creatures; it follows, that it is worthy of him to have corresponding designs. Let us apply this to the mediation of Christ, and the price of Redemption. As a Governor, I humbly conceive, his design in

this great and glorious medium of happiness, was to lay an adequate foundation for every human subject of his government, on which he may hope for the favour of God; and on which he may seek remission of sin, justification, holiness, happiness,—in one word *salvation*, on the terms prescribed; terms worthy of God and our rational nature. But on the rejection or neglect of these terms, the sinner has no one to blame but himself, and the supreme ruler will appear clear and glorious when he judges and condemns him for neglecting so great salvation.

§ 21. But when we consider the design of God in the character of a Sovereign, we may regard the same object, the invaluable price of redemption, as an adequate foundation for actually redeeming from all evil those who are eventually saved; and for imparting to them the influence of the Spirit, whereby they comply with the terms proposed, and enjoy the promised blessings. As God does nothing without design, and without an adequate ground for it; and as forming a vital union with Christ, a spiritual renovation by the Holy Spirit, upholding the soul in the midst of temptations and formidable dangers, and finally investing soul and body with eternal life and glory, are the acts of his sovereign pleasure; his design,

I apprehend, in substituting the atoning sacrifice, was to lay a suitable basis for these acts.

§ 22. Thus the atoning sacrifice is one, unchangeably the same. In whatever light we consider the divine character, compared with the actual state of mankind, it is an adequate basis of reconciliation, and of the divine proceedings towards them. Viewing them as morally free, and accountable agents, what can be desired by them more suitable to their wants? Through this medium they are encouraged, invited, requested, commanded with awful denunciations, to seek pardon and peace, grace and glory, by compliance with the most reasonable terms—by casting away the arms of rebellion, by penitential submission, by cordial belief in the divine testimony concerning Christ, by returning to their allegiance, and by resigning themselves to the direction and government of him who has all power in heaven and earth. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." But, he who obeyeth not the voice of this prophet shall be condemned and cut off. "These mine enemies who would not that I should rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me."

§ 23. But it is a humbling and awful fact, that man is not only "far gone from original

righteousness," but also of his own fallen nature is "inclined to evil." He has a carnal mind, and "the carnal mind is enmity with God." He is "not inclined" to deny himself, to take up his cross and follow Christ, to pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, reign over him. But shall the want of inclination, a good will, and a ready mind in man, render the sacrifice of Christ of no effect? God forbid. As a sovereign he had a design in laying such a wonderful and glorious foundation, which no blindness, enmity, pride, or wickedness of mankind should frustrate. The sacrifice of Christ shall become the foundation of triumphant grace. For the sake of it, the Redeemer "shall see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." A goodly multitude shall be "made willing in the day of his power." He will slay their enmity by spiritually uniting them to himself, and at the same time constitute them righteous. They shall submit themselves before him, deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. He puts his fear in their hearts, draws them with the cords of love, and it is "given to them, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

§ 24. Having endeavoured to explain and illustrate what I presumed to call "the harmonizing principle," in reference to the great topic of redemption, I will now advert to his Lordship's declarations on the subject. It is asserted, in the first place, that 'the doctrine of 'universal redemption—was directly opposed 'by CALVIN.' His Lordship I hope will excuse me for asserting, in return, that this eminent reformer did *not* 'directly' oppose the doctrine of universal redemption, in the sense now explained, as far as I have been able to collect by a frequent search into his voluminous writings. He admitted a universal price of redemption; but he had reasons innumerable against the notion of an actual redemption of all men from sin and misery. He maintained that the *remedy* was universal, and that it was universally proposed to mankind, according to God's rectoral design; but not that it was the sovereign design of God by it to make mankind universally and indiscriminately submissive, and compliant with the terms on which the blessings resulting from it were to be enjoyed. Had this been his design, not one of the human race could perish; for "who hath resisted his will?" If God were to design this, and to exert his power on the heart accordingly, who could prevent him? What CALVIN's

ill digested reprobating decree implied *indirectly*, is another consideration.

§ 25. CALVIN, however, certainly did 'oppose' his Lordship's notion of universal redemption,—which we now proceed to examine. The explanatory clauses, indicating what was intended by the phrase "universal redemption," are these: 'namely, that *the benefits* of Christ's 'passion extend to the *whole human race;* or, 'that every man *is enabled* to attain salvation 'through the merits of Christ.' If by '*the* 'benefits' be meant *some* benefits, what Calvinist, ancient or modern, ever denied it? But if by '*the* benefits' be meant *all* the benefits of Christ's passion, surely his Lordship will not deliberately maintain it, as it is 'directly op-'posed,' by obvious innumerable *facts.* For instance, a clean heart, a right spirit, justification, adoption, divine love shed abroad in the heart, being kept by divine power through faith unto salvation, an introduction to the heavenly Jerusalem, a glorious resurrection, and eternal life,—all these are benefits of Christ's passion; but are they extended to 'the whole 'human race?' If it be said that they are extended conditionally, proposed objectively, or in such a manner that all *may* obtain them, were it not for their own fault; this I have already admitted. But such is the present state

of mankind, that were there no absolute, as well as conditional benefits, it is *possible*, that not one human being would in fact be finally saved. With his Lordship's notion of free will as going before, and turning the balance in every instance, while human nature is "inclined to evil," even in his own sense of this phrase, where lies the *probability*, much less the certainty, of the final salvation of any individual? It is of no use to contend, that God will assist mankind IF they will faithfully employ the powers and talents with which they are entrusted, without producing the evidence of probability, at least, that they WILL do this. But was it worthy of divine wisdom to prepare a kingdom of eternal glory on the precarious basis of free will exclusively,—on a bare peradventure that some would surmount their native depravity, and thus prepare the way for obtaining efficacious grace? That mankind *ought* to improve their powers and means, is one thing; but that any *will* do so, without the internal, efficacious grace of Christ 'going 'before to give them a good will,' is quite another.

§ 26. It is again included in his Lordship's notion of universal redemption, 'that every 'man *is enabled* to attain salvation through the 'merits of Christ.' What is the precise import

of the word 'enabled' in this connexion? If it be, that the merits of Christ not only constitute an adequate provision, but also that they are placed within the attainment of every man for his salvation, if it be not his own fault, this is not denied by modern Calvinists, but fully admitted. This, however, is a very unusual acceptation of the term; nor in fact, does the use of it in this, appear more appropriate than in the following connexions: a man is 'enabled' to feed himself and grow healthy, because he has an invitation to an entertainment, and free access, if he please: or, a man is 'enabled' to paint a good likeness, because he is presented with all the requisite materials. If, however, the meaning be, that every man is endowed with a suitable disposition, or the requisite ability in point of inclination to good, where is the evidence for such an assumption? If every one be thus well inclined, how comes it to pass that every one does not attain the salvation set before him? Doubtless 'every man' has physical powers, adequate to the attainment, and these he has from the bounty of the Creator: but is 'every man' so 'enabled' as to have "the thoughts and desires of his heart cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?" Or is there any sufficient evidence to prove, that any man, since the beginning of time, attained salvation without it? Did ever any man

sincerely desire, and earnestly seek the blessings of salvation, through the merits of Christ, in God's own way, and on his appointed terms, who was not *thus* 'enabled' to do so? If these questions could be answered, and proved in the affirmative, something to good purpose might be effected against the Calvinists.

§ 27. If a modern Calvinist uses the terms "possibility" or "impossibility," in reference to the attainment of salvation, we should not immediately infer that a decree of prevention is implied. The actual state of man forms the barrier. That CALVIN's notion of a reprobating decree was an unfounded conclusion, will be noticed under the next subject of examination. We are now to advert to his Lordship's remaining argument in favour of universal redemption, in his sense of the term, founded on a comparison between the extent of the evil and the supposed extent of the remedy. If this argument prove any thing, it renders itself useless by proving too much, on the one hand, and by opposing plain fact on the other. The evil consisted not only in guilt incurred, which might be removed by righteousness; but in great depravity. If therefore the remedy were 'commensurate to the evil,' *all* that depravity which was introduced, ought also to be removed. But this proves more than his Lord-

ship can intend; and, in reality, forms a contradiction; for it would be the same as to prevent that evil which at the same time is supposed to exist. The argument also militates against plain revealed and experienced facts; for much of the evil introduced by Adam's delinquency, continues from age to age, and will continue for ever.

§ 28. If the meaning be, that the remedy 'proposed,' though not *applied,* may be expected from 'a Being of infinite power and 'mercy,' to be 'commensurate to the evil;' it appears from the preceding pages, that this is not disputed; and modern Calvinists, both in the church of England and out of it, give the most cogent proof of this as their prevailing sentiment, by taking a very active part, in sending missionaries and bibles to every quarter of the globe. As the evil is universal, they endeavour, according to the will of God, that the 'proposed' remedy should be equally unlimited,—that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, in the name, and through the merits, of Jesus Christ: but alas how few receive the message; for "darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." Were the influence of the Holy Spirit, however, which is an important part of the remedy, conferred upon *every* man,

the gospel remedy would experience a far different reception in the world. That 'a Being 'of infinite power and mercy' *could* effect this, as that he could send his Son into the world to become a sacrifice for sin, and a price of redemption, and *could* ensure the reception of the remedy, and salvation by it, who can doubt? But he is a Being of infinite Wisdom and Justice, as well as of Power and Mercy.

SECT. II.

The Bishop's avowed Sentiments on PREDESTINATION *and* ELECTION, *examined.*

§ 1. The subject stated.

§ 2—4. That Predestination is irreconcilable with divine Goodness and Justice, examined.

§ 5, 6. A reprobating decree is not implied in Non-Election. § 8. Nor in Preterition, § 9. The Non-predestinated are not denied, repulsed, or hindered. § 10. Remarks on the term Reprobation.

§ 11—13. An enquiry, Why CALVIN and some others inferred a *decree* of Reprobation, and Preterition, or Non-Election.

§ 14, 15. The notion of a voluntary restriction of Prescience, considered. § 16—20. Whether there be any other ground of *certain* futurition beside a divine decree, discussed. § 21. Inferences from the preceding discussion. § 22—25. That we cannot reconcile Prescience with other divine perfections; and § 24. With Free-agency, examined.

§ 25. That the actions of Free-agents are only *permitted*, examined. § 26, 27. His Lordship's account of divine decrees and appointments, and of Election, examined.

§ 1. THE remarks made by his Lordship on the subject under present examination, are so numerous, that it is no easy task to reduce them to any general heads. However, the most prominent are the following: That Predestination is irreconcilable with the divine goodness and justice—that absolute election and reprobation are inseparable—that we cannot reconcile prescience with other divine attributes and free agency—that the actions of free agents are only permitted—that God did appoint the power of believing and obeying to *all* who hear

the gospel—but did not appoint that the benefits of Christ should be enjoyed by *some only*—that the prescience of our being ordained to eternal life, is founded on our compliance—that the idea of a covenant is inconsistent with the Calvinistic system—that there was no difference between Judas and the other apostles, except good works—that an exhortation to walk worthily, is incompatible with certainty and salvation—that the general terms of God's love, are irreconcilable with his electing some and leaving others to perish—that election is not confined to those who will actually be saved—that to choose in Christ, is to make known the gospel of Christ—that the "predestination" of the 17th Article, is God's gracious purpose to make a conditional offer of salvation to men—and, finally, that Calvinistic Election is disclaimed and condemned in the strongest terms in the 17th Article.

§ 2. In the first place, his Lordship supposes, that predestination is irreconcilable with divine goodness and justice. 'I reject the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination, not because 'it is incomprehensible, but because I think it '*irreconcilable* with the justice and goodness of 'God.'* In another place it is said, 'It is not

* Refut. p. 252.

'denied that God had a *right*, founded on the 'uncontrovertable will of the Creator over his 'creatures, to consign the far greater part of 'men to eternal misery, and to bestow eternal 'happiness on a chosen few, although there 'was in themselves no ground whatever for 'such distinction.—But the question is, whether 'such a conduct would have been consistent 'with infinite justice and infinite mercy.'* This last quotation appears to me very singular—and very objectionable—as containing the most exceptionable part of Hypercalvinism! That must be a very anomalous and strange kind of 'right' which is not consistent with *infinite justice.* If men were consigned to eternal misery without *desert*, and this founded in right, what is it but saying that the Creator had a *right* to be *unjust!* But if men so consigned, *deserved* it, by previous delinquency, how would it be inconsistent with *justice?* Is it not of the essence of justice to give to every one his due? To ascribe to the Creator, preserver, and benefactor of his creatures a right, an '*arbitrary*' right, of conferring benefits upon them beyond their due, is infinitely worthy of him; but to ascribe to him the same right to render the undeserving miserable, is to offer him a compliment which he must needs reject with infinite disdain,

* Refut. pp. 258, 259.

—a *right* to be *unjust*, were he not infinitely just, good, and merciful!

§ 3. But what is the Predestination of modern Calvinists, and how is it irreconcilable with the justice and goodness of God? What we maintain is, that all mankind are in a state of guilt and sinful imbecility—that God foresaw this from eternity—that he therefore predestinated an adequate remedy in the sacrifice of Christ—that this should be announced to men, as commensurate to the evil.—We further maintain that there was not in the present state of man any ground of certainty, that any one, without preventing gracious influence, would avail himself of the proposed remedy—and therefore, that God *predestinated*, under the direction of infinite wisdom, to influence the hearts of some, i. e. those who are finally glorified, to repent, believe, obey, and persevere in a holy course, as the way to everlasting happiness. Heaven is the end, but holy obedience is the way to it. We hold no Predestination that separates the end and the means. We do not presume to conjecture, *a priori*, who are predestinated to eternal life; but rather infer, from the imbecility of man, that if any one is penitent, faithful, diligent, persevering, and finally glorified, these great effects are from the special and distinguishing energy of God; and

that whatever he does in time he purposed to do from eternity. This is our Predestination.

§ 4. And what is there in this 'irrecon-'cilable with the justice and goodness of God?' Is it unjust to shew favour to the unworthy? We own it is not the proper *effect* of justice, but this is far from implying that it is unjust. Mercy, a species of divine goodness, is sovereign; but to confer a favour arbitrarily, under the direction of wisdom, does injury to no one. If God were just *only*, there would be no room for mercy. If he had not a *right* to act the part of a sovereign benefactor, there could have been no plan of redemption and salvation. What is required by justice, is to give to every one his due; but in the plan of redeeming mercy, justice is honoured, while "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In this Calvinistic Predestination, therefore, it is difficult to find even the semblance of infringement of either justice or goodness. It is not inconsistent with *goodness*, that some should be made holy and happy, who did not deserve it, nor inconsistent with *justice*, that God should "have mercy on whom he will have mercy."

§ 5. In the next place, his Lordship maintains, that absolute election and reprobation are

'*inseparable*.' That CALVIN and other eminent divines before and after him, have drawn this *inference* is allowed, as their writings testify;—and it is equally manifest that their opponents have seized the concession with avidity and triumph. But if the concession has been erroneously made, which I am fully satisfied was the case, and shall endeavour to substantiate; the strongest objection ever made to the doctrine of Calvinistic Election, falls. While a decree of Reprobation, Preterition, or Non-election, is admitted, as the inseparable concomitant of a decree of Election, it is not to be wondered at that the latter should have so many opponents, or that the Bishop of Lincoln should be of the number. 'If reprobation be unfounded, 'which some modern Calvinists allow, it follows, 'upon their own principles, that election is also 'unfounded, since the latter *cannot exist* without 'the former.'*—'"So that, says Dr. WHITBY, there 'is *no possibility of asserting* one of these decrees, 'without owning the other also; and so whatso-'ever argument holds good against an absolute 'decree of Reprobation, must certainly destroy 'the opposite decree of absolute Election."'*

§ 6. It might appear an adventurous attempt, to encounter what Dr. WHITBY, and with him

* Refut. p. 256. † Ib. p 255.

the Bishop of Lincoln, deem impossible; or to assert that "which there is *no possibility* of asserting." But the reader will be pleased to recollect, that many things have been for a time considered as impossible paradoxes, which after all were great truths, and which have been fairly demonstrated to be such. For want of patient investigation and the use of proper means, with which God has furnished us, we are too apt to pronounce one thing unfathomable, and another impossible to be surmounted,—as a person in a labyrinth asserts that 'there is no possibility' of his getting out of it. Many, for example, throw into the way of truth such a stumbling-block as the following: "Let us suppose the number of mankind to be two millions of men; if out of these, one million only, by the decree of Election, be infallibly appointed to eternal life, and these certainly and absolutely distinguished from others, not only as to their number, but their persons also; who can deny, but that one million also, and those certain as to their persons, are as absolutely comprized under the *decree* of Non-Election or Reprobation, as the others were under the decree of Election and Predestination." As this argument, borrowed by his Lordship to refute Calvinism, contains a summary of many scattered objections, I shall now attempt to shew its fallacy.

§ 7. In the first place, it takes for granted what can never be proved, that Non-Election implies a *decree*. Non-Election is a negative idea, *not* electing; but to decree a negation is as absurd as to decree nothing, or to *decree not-to-decree*. The notion of decreeing to *permit*, involves the same absurdity; for to permit, in this connexion, is not to hinder: but to decree not-to-hinder, is the same as to decree to-do-nothing, or, as before, to decree not-to-decree. The fallacy consists in the supposition that Non-Election is a positive idea, and therefore requires a positive determination, by way of decree. The truth of the case is, that on supposition of one million being elected to holiness as the means, and happiness as the end, the other million is not elected to holiness and happiness. These two things are as opposite as doing and not doing, but to suppose an infinitely perfect Being to *decree* what he does *not do*, is incompatible; for it supposes him to decree to do what he decrees not to do. It is indeed perfectly scriptural and rational, to say, that whatever is done by an infinitely wise Being, is done according to *design*, an unvarying purpose, which is commonly termed a decree; but what meaning can there be in his designing to do the contrast to his doing?

§ 8. The same reasoning is applicable to

preterition. The mind, without due attention to caution, is liable to be deceived by the fallacy which attaches a positive idea to the term, or the thing intended by it. We are disposed, by common associations, to conclude that as to pass by is an *act* of a person, so the *object* passed by requires a designed determination for that purpose. But this is a fallacious conclusion. When a shepherd, for instance, passes by a number of sheep, and fixes upon one, a voluntary act of choosing that one does not imply another voluntary act to pass by the others. He knows all alike, and his wisdom suggests the object of his choice, and this object he actually chooses; the others he passes by; but what is thus expressed by a positive term, implies nothing positive with respect to the objects. They are no more affected by it, than they are by simple knowledge and wisdom. Thus we suppose the divine Shepherd of Israel knows all mankind with infinite precision. He sees them in a wandering and deplorable state; and as they are rational and accountable beings, he pities their condition, and makes adequate provision for their wants by a Mediator. He causes the appointed remedy to be proclaimed as glad tidings; and he orders this gospel of the kingdom to be preached to all these creatures, among all nations, for the obedience of faith. We also suppose, that not one is *of himself* so inclined

to good, as to repent heartily and believe with unfeigned faith; in short that no one is so well disposed, in himself considered, as to comply with the terms, or conditions proposed, though perfectly equitable and highly advantageous. Hence we suppose, that no other mode is left for securing a flock of true converts, who will devote themselves to God in order to serve him in righteousness and true holiness, but those whom he draws with the cords of love. His wisdom dictates whom to discriminate, though alike destitute of claim on his mercy; and, for a reason worthy of himself, though to us inscrutable, he effectually renews their hearts, by which they are rendered willing and able to comply with the terms required. They repent, believe, obey, persevere in a holy life, and enter into bliss; blessings which they would never have enjoyed if left to themselves, or without discriminating mercy. This discriminating favour, including the means, as well as the end, is divine Election.

§ 9. Were we to maintain that any are *denied*, *repulsed*, or any way *hindered* from participating the same blessings, on their compliance with the terms proposed; there would be indeed a just ground of complaint, as it would imply a positive act of refusal, in opposition to just claim, a claim founded on fulfilling a condition

graciously proposed. But this is not the case; we hold no such opinion. This would be unworthy a good, gracious, merciful, and just Being. Even for a *good* desire to be *repulsed*, involves incompatible ideas; for all good is from God, and therefore all good desires: but for an infinite good to repel and refuse good, is absurd. All the good, the virtue, and the holiness in the universe, is from God, ultimately, therefore must needs be approved by him. Into our notion, therefore, of Preterition and Non-Election, nothing positive, in the way of resistance, enters; and we suppose that the objects who are *not* elected are no more affected by non-election than by mere knowledge, — *simplex intelligentia, quæ ponit nihil in esse.*

§ 10. The term *Reprobation* is more equivocal, being used in different connexions to denote different ideas. Some have used it to signify the positive idea of rejection, as an arbitrary act of will. Others consider it as synonymous with Preterition and Non-Election,—still in the positive sense; and some, as denoting rejection by an act of justice: while others make it to signify a simple act of disapproval, irrespective of demerit. The use of words is an arbitrary and often a capricious thing; but not so ideas. The first idea

appears to me unworthy of the divine character, as before explained; the second has been shewn to be a fallacy; the third indentifies it with an exercise of justice; and the fourth makes it an act of the same quality with the first, but not to the same degree. In no other sense can I conceive the phrase 'a decree of reprobation' admissible, than as it denotes a determination either to reject unjust claims, or to devote to misery persons *as wicked*, which is the third idea,—and to this our opponents can have no objection.

§ 11. Here I would propose, with becoming deference, an enquiry, how the celebrated reformer, CALVIN, and many others who hold the doctrine of Election, so readily concluded, that a decree in favour of some, implied a decree of reprobation, in any sense but as an exercise of justice towards the wicked. And this I conceive to be, their assuming as an undoubted truth, that there is no other assignable adequate cause of any event, beside the divine will. But when pressed with the striking consequence of this maxim, that it made God the author of sin, they invented the distinction between a decree to *effect* and a decree to *permit*. This, however, was only a verbal subterfuge; for it still ascribed the *cause* of sin to

the decree and will of God. When pressed further on the subject, how it can be worthy of an infinitely good and benevolent being to *permit* sin by a *decree*, they have been found to confess, that what is evil in the perpetrator is good in the decreer. *His* end in so doing, they have pleaded, is to promote the highest ultimate good; but the *sinner's* end is self gratification. This mode of reasoning, however, can never remove the odium cast upon the decreer of evil, by whatever words, or in whatever shape, the idea of decree may be represented. Much ingenuity and subtlety may be shewn in attempting, on that assumption, to clear the divine character: but after all, the cloud remains; and on such principles ever will remain: and if we are acquainted with none better, a modest retractation, and a humble acknowledgement of our ignorance, is the most pious and becoming conduct.

§ 12. But, it will be said — by those who endeavour to satisfy themselves with the notion, that every event, the sinfulness of an act not excepted, requires a decree—if we reject this principle, we shall be obliged to adopt an acknowledged absurdity, i. e. that there may be an effect without an adequate cause. Or must we, it may be asked, admit two eternal principles, one good and the other

bad? Certainly not; for this would lead us to endless contradictions. The idea of eternal evil, is the most senseless of all others; for what is evil but a deviation from or a contrast to good? Were there not a first absolute good, evil would be an utter impossibility. To every mind that duly reflects, the notion of eternal evil must appear to overturn itself. Is there then, it may be further asked, any medium between this delirium of the Persians and Manichees, and the admission of God's decree or fixed purpose as the cause of every effect? Is it the human *will* when human actions which God disapproves are in question? It is conceded, that there is certainly no human action displeasing to God, where the human will is not employed: but what disposes that will to act in opposition to the will of its Maker and preserver?

§ 13. If there be not some OTHER cause to which this may be ascribed, we are reduced to one of these considerations,—that a cause opposes itself, or,—that there is an effect without a cause. But where shall we find an adequate cause? Is it contingence? What *is* contingence? It will be probably answered, that a contingent being or event, is what may or may not happen according to free will. Granted; but it also follows, that in this sense,

every being is contingent except the first, who does not owe his existence to free-will,—as every other being may be or may not be, according to the free-will of the Creator. And as to events, there is not one which is not, in this respect, contingent; for, antecedently, it might not have been. Either the interposing will of God might have prevented it by a miracle, or the secondary agent might have been annihilated. If by a contingent event be meant, that which is not known until it takes place; then it follows, that what is foreknown is *not* contingent to him who does foreknow it, though it may be so to others.

§ 14. Can any thing, in this respect, be contingent to God? Is he not infinite intelligence itself? Some indeed have strangely fancied, that though he *might* foreknow every event before it takes place, if he pleased; yet that he does not *choose* to know it. But is not his *knowledge* of all things, both in himself and out of himself, an infinite perfection? What can be more fanciful, than the notion of an infinite perfection being abridged, or limited by an act of choice? If so, any other perfection may be limited. And if limited in *some* degree, why not in a still further degree, until nothing of it be left! Absolute infinity limited by will! Yet, it may be said, that God *can do* all things, if he

pleased to exert his omnipotence; but he does not choose to exert it to the utmost. That he can do all things which do not involve a contradiction, is very true; but to suppose that he *can* limit an essential perfection of his nature, is surely the grossest contradiction. The idea of omnipotence is one thing, but the *exertion* of power is another. The former, like intelligence, is an infinite perfection of the divine nature, and therefore cannot be limited by will, any more than the divine existence. The idea of power exerted *ad extra*, stands related to a limited object; and as the idea of a limited object excludes infinity, the exertion of power cannot be infinite; for it implies a power to produce infinite effects,—that is, effects equal to the first cause, and as numerous as there are objects of power! Still, it may be said, that the *attribute* of knowledge is not limited, but its *exercise*. But is there any conceivable medium between knowledge and ignorance?—and a voluntary ignorance, if in this case it were possible, is of all others the worst.

§ 15. Knowledge is essential to wisdom, and to be voluntarily ignorant is a voluntary limitation of wisdom. Is it then conceivable that the all-wise God either would or could be voluntarily unwise? Besides, the right exercise of power implies knowledge; and if that exercise

be infinitely right, how can this consist with a voluntary ignorance? If the divine knowledge do not include all beings and events, his designs (if on the supposition he could have any) may be continually frustrated; and if it do not include all *possibles*, how could *any* design be infinitely wise, since it possibly might be wiser? In short, the fallacy lies in this false assumption, —that knowledge is an *active* principle; which is in fact to identify it with power. The moment we conceive a possible change in divine knowledge, were it indeed compatible, we must borrow the idea of power to effect it: that is, we must borrow one attribute in order to lessen another! In short, there is no end to the absurd consequences of a sentiment which now struggles for popularity as an instrument to oppose Calvinism. I must, however, do justice to the Bishop of Lincoln by observing, that this does not appear to be his avowed opinion; and an apology might be made to the reader for detaining him in making an exposure of it, were it not that it contributes to my design to expose false principles which are levelled against modern Calvinism.

§ 16. We know from the most unequivocal testimonies of scripture, as well as from the nature of infinite perfections, that God does foreknow future events which are to *us* contingent,

otherwise how could the free determinations of men and devils be accurately foretold through the whole system of prophecy? Now the question returns, *can* there be any principle of certainty beside the divine decree? Must not the divine *will* be the ultimate source of all certainty? No. But before I assign my direct reason for this laconic answer, let me be allowed to ask another question. Is the divine will the ultimate source of a mathematical point? This is neither matter nor spirit, neither substance nor form. It has neither length, breadth, nor thickness; it has neither thought, consciousness, nor, in brief, any positive being: it is a mere relative nothing: it is negation of length, breadth, and thickness, as related to something that has these properties. Yet will any say, that it is not a source of certainty? Rather, what can be more certain than many mathematical conclusions drawn from this negative idea? Without the idea of a mathematical point, we can have no idea of a mathematical line; and consequently of a circle, a triangle, a square, or any other diagram: but by the admission of this *non-entity* as it stands *related* to dimensions, we have demonstrations of the highest certainty.

§ 17. This, however, is but a specimen of a negative principle inseparably related to every

portion of the created universe. Were I to say that a negative principle pervades every portion of created existence, some minds, led away by fancy, rather than corrected by judgment, might connect with the positive term a positive idea. Language was first formed on the principles of sense and physical nature, where so much positive energy is discoverable; and the farther we remove from these appearances, to abstraction of thought, for instance, and to negative ideas especially, it is scarcely possible to employ terms by which we are not liable to be misguided, if not attended with either settled definitions, or frequent explanation of the meaning intended to be conveyed by them. Language, however, is of arbitrary appointment;—and it is a pitiable prejudice too often indulged, that thoughts must be governed by words, as if these were the unerring standard of accurate conception, or that the mind was made for language, and not language for the mind.

§ 18. If there be in every created being a *negative principle*, itself not created, and if such negative principle may be an adequate reason of certainty, then a divine decree of what is good, does not *necessarily* imply that any real evil in the universe (of which there is much) is *decreed*; nor does it follow that a divine decree

of election is 'inseparable' from a decree of reprobation, in the obnoxious sense of the term. That there *is* in every created being a negative principle which is itself no created object, is necessarily implied in the negative ideas of limitation and dependence. No proof is required to shew that a creature, however exalted, is limited in his being and properties; and it is as evidently impossible that he should be otherwise, as it is to multiply absolute infinities. It is no honour to the Deity to suppose that he *can* create an unlimited being: for, in reality, to assert that this cannot be done, is the same thing as to assert that God alone is absolutely infinite. It is equally clear that this limitation is a negative idea, implying a comparative defect,—and no one will affirm, that negation, or defect, as related to the created object, is itself created,—because whatever is created must have a positive existence. It cannot be denied, again, that such limitation involves innumerable certainties. It is certain, for instance, from the very idea of limitation, that a creature *will not* do a great variety of things. The same remarks are applicable to the negative idea of dependence.

§ 19. Now seeing innumerable certain consequences *may* arise from negative considerations, and these negations are no objects of creating

power, though the beings to which they stand related, are so; it follows that some events may be certain which are not decreed, and if certain, may be foreknown as such. Thus God may foreknow a sinful *defect*, without decreeing it, though he has created and therefore decreed the being in whom the defect is found. He may foreknow the defects of ignorance, moral weakness, and sinful neglect, which are no objects of his power, and consequently of his decree, though the persons to whom these sinful defects are attached are the objects both of his power and purpose;—and who can consistently doubt, that what he *may* know, he actually *does* know. Now as certain and certainly foreknown consequences, may be the necessary result of a negative principle, involved in the ideas of limitation and dependence, the idea of a decree is excluded from these consequences, as involving the notion of doing what is superfluous. Impute to God the decreeing of that which is certain to take place, (as that a dependent and limited creature will *not* do some things) without a decree, and you impute folly to infinite wisdom.

§ 20. But, on the other hand, human persons and faculties, though limited and dependent, have a *positive* existence: nor can it admit of a doubt, that certain consequences may arise from a positive principle. Such a principle is the first

cause, without whose energy (and consequently purpose) no positive effect can possibly take place. Hence it follows, that whatever is positive in any human act is from God, as its energetic cause, and is therefore good; but whatever is negative in the same, is not from God, and therefore not good, because he is the only source of good, and of good only,—for to say that any evil proceeds from infinite good, is precisely the same thing as to say, that it is not evil. Before we can assert, that no moral evil is attached to human beings in our world, we must deny not only the testimony of the inspired writings, but also that of our consciences: and to assert that sin, or the sinfulness of actions, is a positive thing, is to make God the ultimate cause of it,—which is virtually to assert that it is a *good* thing.

§ 21. From the whole of the preceding considerations, I humbly conceive, we may safely infer the following particulars: 1. That there are negative principles of consequences which are infallibly certain; and therefore that there are some events which come to pass without a decree. 2. That a decree to elect some in wisdom and mercy, while not even a good thought or desire of any one is opposed but rather approved, does not imply a decree of Non-Election. 3. That all the good in the

created universe is from the will and consequently the decree or purpose of God; because good effects can have no other adequate cause. 4. That no evil in the universe is decreed by a Being of infinite goodness and benevolence; because this would be to oppose himself. 5. That the laws of physical nature, the moral law, and the operations of justice, are in themselves good, though the innocent occasions of evil to individuals. 6. That all holiness and happiness in creatures are foreseen, because the effects of divine energy and purpose, inasmuch as whatever God effects, he designs, and what he designs he must needs foresee. 7. That evil which is unworthy of God to effect, and consequently to purpose, is foreseen in its negative principle, which is not *from* God, though *related* to creatures and their actions which it is worthy of him to create and support. 8. That the real origin of moral evil is a negative principle as related to a positive and active being, viz. a free agent in search of happiness. 9. That the divine sovereign power could prevent moral evil in every instance, or remove its effects, but that such a prevention and removal are not, in all cases, consistent with God's infinite wisdom, and with the glory of his perfections, a position which is abundantly confirmed from scripture testimony and plain facts. 10. That the doctrine of Election, as before stated, is founded on two

principles, first, the foreseen insufficiency of sinful creatures to secure their own happiness, and, secondly, the sovereign mercy of God, under the direction of supreme wisdom,—inscrutable by creatures, of whatever order, and in whatever state,—resolving to effect *that* for its objects, which his infinite knowledge foresaw they would not effect of themselves, however suitable the means offered them, or strong the objective inducements. 11. The final inference is, that the Predestination or Election here maintained—and which I consider as precisely the same with what is expressed in the 17th Article—is infinitely worthy of the divine character and perfections.

§ 22. It is now time to advert to his Lordship's assertion, That we cannot reconcile *prescience* with other divine attributes and with *free agency*. His words are, 'We are utterly 'incapable of comprehending how God's pre-'science consists with the other attributes of 'the Deity and with the free agency of man.'* It is the part of Christian humility to acknowledge that there are innumerable things which we cannot comprehend; and the remark might be extended to the most exalted of created intelligences. There are, however, many things

* Refut. p. 252.

which we may sufficiently apprehend for the purposes of piety and useful practice; and it becomes us to be cautious how we fix our own capacity or incapacity as the standard for all others, or even for ourselves. What we know not now we may know hereafter, even in this life, if divinely taught. God is the fountain of wisdom; and "Who teacheth like him?" He can not only present the objects (the utmost that other teachers can do) but bestow the capacity to learn; and where he does this, it is not humility but ingratitude to disown it.

§ 23. God is infinitely wise and therefore knowing; but what attribute of the Deity has even the appearance of being inconsistent with this acknowledged fact? It is acknowledged that *Prescience* is included in infinite knowledge; I ask again, what attribute even *appears* to be inconsistent with it? Is it goodness, or holiness, or justice, or mercy? But is it not most apparently consistent, that an infinitely good and holy, just and merciful Being, should have a perfect knowledge of all beings and events, which we call past, present, and future? It seems to me an undeniable truth, for which evidence has been produced, that all the *good* in the created universe, of every description, is the effect of God's will and purpose, his

power and energy. How consistent then with all his attributes, that he should foreknow every thing he effects? Again, all evil, properly so called, results from a negative principle, which neither is nor can be the object of will, or of divine causation, though related to what is so. Now is there any appearance of inconsistency between a divine attribute, as justice, mercy, &c. and the *prescience* of events in their adequate causes? What can be more consistent with the attributes of Deity, than that he should perfectly foreknow, what his creatures ought to do, according to the capacities, powers, means and opportunities which he would give them; and what they would not do in some circumstances, as well as what they would do in others?

§ 24. But, it may be said, the chief difficulty consists in comprehending the consistency between the divine prescience, and the *free agency* of man. Granted. But it does not appear to be an insurmountable difficulty, except when the solution is attempted on false principles. Adopt the true, and the difficulty vanishes. We all agree in the idea of agency, in general; but probably not in the idea of freedom. The last term, in my conception, is properly and consistently expressive of a *negative* idea—not a power, nor a faculty, but

exemption related to the will. But, as in the view of infinite intelligence nothing can be fortuitous or contingent, though many things are so to limited knowledge; and as all knowledge implies a ground of it; and as every event has for its ground either an efficient or deficient cause; and as all causes, both efficient and deficient, are equally clear to the divine mind;—what appearance of inconsistency is there between prescience and free agency? If indeed we adopt the false principle of free will having *no cause* of its determination, either efficient or deficient, the difficulty of reconciliation will be insurmountable, and it may be justly said, 'We are incapable of comprehending it.' Who is capable of comprehending the truth of a false principle, or the harmony of error with divine verity? But if all the good determinations of free will proceed from a good principle of which God is the author; and all evil determinations from a negative principle related to what is good, as the human will is, in itself considered; the consequence is conclusive, that it would be unworthy of every divine attribute, and especially prescience, to suppose that any determination of the free agent is not foreseen. True principles may give us a knowledge that is clear and decisive, if the fault be not in ourselves; but erroneous principles never can. With the latter we may perplex ourselves and

others for ever; but with the former we may arrive at certainty and repose.

§ 25. We are again told by the Bishop, that the actions of free agents are only *permitted*. 'The actions of free agents can only be said 'to be *permitted* by God.' This, as a general assertion, is highly exceptionable. That this is the case as to the fall 'of Adam, and every 'other human transgression of the divine will,' is not doubted: but with what propriety can the general assertion be applied to the *good* actions of free agents? Are these only '*per-* '*mitted?*' Does not the page of inspiration expressly declare, respecting the good result, that "God worketh in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure?" What is it less than a perversion and confusion of language, as well as of ideas, to make *permitting* and *working* synonymous? Is it consistent with Christian or scientific moral principles, to suppose that fallen man will do good, if only permitted, or not hindered? We cease to wonder that any writer, though adorned with various knowledge and erudition, holding an opinion like this, should so frequently fall into inconsistencies with himself, as well as with divine truth. Surely the actions of free agents have a *cause*, an adequate cause, as well as all other effects in the universe; but is there any

adequate cause of good actions beside good principles; or of these, beside divine efficiency? Free will without *some* cause, and a free will to good, without a *good* cause, are notions worthy of a bad cause, and of a worse name than I shall permit myself to bestow upon them.

§ 26. His Lordship further avows it as his opinion, that God did *appoint* the power of believing and obeying to *all* who hear the gospel; but did *not* appoint that the benefits of Christ should be enjoyed by *some only*. 'To 'send Christ into the world that mankind 'might be saved, was indeed the *eternal pur-* '*pose* of God; this he decreed from the be- 'ginning; but, in making this decree, he did '*not appoint*, that the benefits of Christ's mis- 'sion should be enjoyed by certain individuals 'only, but that they should extend to all who 'believed and obeyed; and that every one, to 'whom the gospel should be made known, 'should have the *power* of believing and obey- 'ing. There was *no absolute* Election of *parti-* '*cular persons* who must necessarily be saved, 'but a conditional offer of salvation to all.'* In this paragraph, as in several others of the same tendency, there appears to me a singular

* Refut. p. 244.

mixture of truth and error. I regard it, with his Lordship, as a great TRUTH, that it was the eternal purpose of God to send Christ into the world, that mankind might be saved — and moreover that the benefits of his mission should extend to all who believed and obeyed. It is also a great TRUTH, that every one to whom the gospel should be made known should have the power—that is, the means, the opportunity, the privilege—of believing and obeying, if he pleased; so that the fault is exclusively in himself if he does not believe and obey. But some part of the passage quoted appears to me very remote from "sound speech that cannot be condemned."

§ 27. 'No *absolute* election of particular 'persons, who must necessarily be saved, but 'a *conditional offer* of salvation to all.' That there is in the gospel a conditional offer made to all addressed by it, is not the point in dispute,—but whether any *perform* the condition, without being chosen and disposed, with a peculiar discrimination. According to his Lordship's theological sentiments, millions of the human race "who are of their own nature inclined to evil," not only *can* but certainly *will* perform the required conditions of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, without any other assistance but what

is common to all. The degeneracy is alike in all, and the assistance is the same; but one man makes *himself* to differ from another. Nobody doubts that one man does differ from another, that the penitent differs from the impenitent, the believing from the unbelieving, the obedient from the disobedient; the question is, whence does the difference originate? This difference is an important *good*,—but is there any good of which God is not the source? It is granted, again, that believing, repenting, and obeying, are *voluntary* acts; but is there any ground of certainty and foreknowledge of a *good will* without preventing grace, or a divine principle imparted from the Father of lights? "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." To deny particular persons to be the subjects of special grace, and of an Election for this purpose, is to limit the free operation of mercy, and to measure infinite wisdom by our own standard. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." All Election is to benefit the creature; but who shall say to infinite beneficence, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further," when one is favoured beyond his just claims, and when no one has less than his due?

SECT. III.

The same subject continued.

§ 1—4. That the Prescience of being ordained to eternal life is *founded* on our compliance, examined.

§ 5—9. That the idea of a *Covenant* is inconsistent with the Calvinistic System, examined. § 10, 11. That absolute Decrees *reject* all Conditions, examined. § 12. The same event may be absolutely decreed in one respect, and conditionally in another. § 13—15. This exemplified in the mediation of Christ. § 16. Inferential Remarks from the discussion of a Decree, a Covenant, and a Condition.

§ 17. That an *Exhortation* to walk worthily, is inconsistent with *certainty* of salvation, examined. § 18—20. The idea of *Motive*, considered. § 21. Exhortation to diligence an essential part of the motive. § 22, 23. That an infallible Decree cannot be made *sure*, examined. § 24. The doctrine of Motives recapitulated. § 25, 26. General conclusions drawn.

§ 27—30. That the Predestination of the 17th Article is God's purpose to make a *conditional offer* of salvation, examined. § 31—34. That Calvinistic Election is disclaimed and *condemned* in the 17th Article, examined.

§ 35, 36. That there was *no difference* between Judas and the other Apostles, except Good Works, examined. § 37, 38. That the general terms of God's love, are irreconcilable with his *leaving some* to perish, examined.

§ 39. That Election is not confined to those who will *actually* be saved, examined.

§ 1. WE are again told, that the prescience of our being ordained to eternal life, is founded in our compliance. 'It being the declared will 'of God, that none to whom the gospel was 'made known, should obtain eternal life, who 'did not believe, and God *foreseeing who would* '*believe*, it might be said, that those believed

'who were ordained to eternal life, that is, 'those *who God foresaw would comply* with the 'ordained condition of faith in Christ, upon 'which eternal life was offered.'* 'In opposition to the Calvinists, I have there [Elements of Christian Theology] represented Predestination as *founded* in foreseen obedience 'and disobedience; and I have added, This 'appears to me the only sense in which Predestination is *reconcilable* with the attributes 'of God and the free-agency of man.'† Here are supposed effects, *viz.* believing, complying, obedience, and disobedience. But every effect must have an adequate cause. That there is an adequate cause of disobedience, as of every evil, has been proved before; but where shall we find an adequate cause of the other effects? It will be probably answered in Free Will. Freedom, as pertaining to the Will, it has been shewn, is a mere negation or exemption, which in the nature of things can have no positive effects; but believing, complying, &c. *are* positive effects; consequently all must be reduced to Will. That this may be a secondary cause of positive effects, is granted; and also the innocent occasion of the sinfulness of actions; but if will, in man, be the deciding cause of his actions, and nothing more, how comes it to pass

* Refut. p. 234. † Ib. p. 251.

that this cause which is found in every man, does not produce the same kind of effects? for it is an acknowledged axiom, That like causes produce like effects.

§ 2. If it be said, That this axiom belongs only to physics, but not to morals, I have a right to demand of the objector a reason of the difference, without his begging the question. No such reason, however, I am satisfied, can be given. If there be no other cause beside Free-will, this palpable absurdity is the consequence, that the same cause produces contrary effects, or, which is no better, that one of the effects is without a cause. God's infinite knowledge, and consequently his foreknowledge, sees all effects in their adequate causes; but how can the same thing be an adequate cause of opposite effects? To recur to the arbitrary nature of the human will, as the image of the arbitrary will of God, is an assumption without proof that there is any such will in the Deity. For will any one seriously avow, that such is the arbitrary nature of the divine Will, that it *may* do evil, as well as good? How much more worthy of supreme excellence is the sentiment, that the divine will cannot be so arbitrary as not to have an *adequate cause* of its determinations, *viz.* the perfect rectitude and infinite wisdom of the divine nature. The absolute nature

of God excludes all cause of defectibility, and consequently of evil effects; and the same absolute nature infallibly secures the goodness of all the effects it produces. The very nature of God, as absolutely perfect, therefore, is incompatible with that *self-sovereignty* of will in him, to which the human will has been supposed to bear a resemblance. But if it be incompatible with the divine nature, with how much less reason can it be assumed to be a property of the human will. Indeed were such a property possible in the nature of things, as a will without any other cause of its determination beside itself, it would be no excellency;—why then should it be claimed for the human will?

§ 3. For these reasons, among others, we are constrained to conclude, that every act of the human will, whether good or bad, has a cause or adequate reason of the effect, beside the mere will itself. And if we view the subject in any light whatever, consistent with the nature of God and of the creature, which I would call the nature of things, we are brought constantly and infallibly to this conclusion,—that every good will is from a good principle, and therefore from God; and every evil will is from some kind of evil principle, and therefore from ourselves. I said, "some kind" of evil principle; in order to distinguish it from a

sinful principle, which would not be true as a general maxim. For though in fallen creatures there is a sinful principle from which evil effects proceed, it would be a direct contradiction to say that the *first* sin of any being was from a sinful cause or principle. We should therefore carefully distinguish between a *morally evil* principle which belongs to depraved creatures, and the merely *defective principle* which alone accounts for the first sinful act or desire.

§ 4. Good acts, therefore, as those enumerated by the Bishop, are not foreseen as springing up of themselves without an adequate cause, but as the effect of holy energy producing them. And a determination to effect this, is to *predestinate* their existence;—which is the same thing in substance as is expressed by this grand theological axiom, ALL GOOD IS FROM GOD. If so, how can any one consistently assert, that Predestination is '*founded* in foreseen obedi-'ence?' It is admitted, that God determines or predestinates enjoyments to the obedient, and misery to the disobedient; but to say that 'this is the *only* sense in which Predestination 'is reconcilable with the attributes of God 'and the free-agency of man,' is extremely objectionable. The πρωτον ψευδος, or the radical fallacy of this error, is a gratuitous assumption,

that good and evil must proceed from the same identical principle;—and it has been adopted by persons of even opposite sentiments. In the one extreme are those who reduce all events to the predestinating will of God; in the other, are those who reduce all moral events, without distinction of good and bad, to the will of man as their ultimate source. Both these extremes, however, pursued to their just consequences, are demonstrably absurd. Neither of them gives unto God the things that are God's, nor unto man the things that are his. The more we investigate the subject without injurious prepossessions, and with a humble mind, the more clearly we shall perceive, that though the human will is the agent, yet the ultimate cause, and the only adequate cause of every *good* effect, is the will of *God*, operating according to his beneficent and infinitely wise nature; and the only ultimate and adequate cause of every bad effect, though, as observed before, the human will is the agent, is a negative principle peculiar to the creature, as inseparably related to it. That there is in every creature such a principle of defectibility, which is, however, under the control of supreme beneficence and wisdom, has been proved before; and that there is no such principle in the self-existent, independent, and all-sufficient Jehovah, needs no proof.

§ 5. His Lordship says, That the idea of a *covenant* is inconsistent with the Calvinistic System. 'God was pleased, both by the law 'and by the gospel, to enter into covenant with 'his chosen people the Jews and Christians; 'to promise reward to the obedient, and to 'threaten punishment to the disobedient. But 'neither in the law nor in the gospel, does he 'promise certain and infallible salvation, or 'threaten absolute and inevitable perdition, to 'any number, or to any description, of persons, 'except as they shall or shall not comply with 'the expressed conditions. Under both cove-'nants, the rewards and punishments are made 'to depend upon the voluntary conduct of each 'individual.—The very idea of *Covenant* is *in-'consistent* with the Calvinistic system. Cove-'nant implies conditions; absolute decrees re-'ject all conditions. A covenant says, you 'shall have such and such a reward, if you act 'in the manner stipulated; absolute decrees 'say, that it is irreversibly determined by the 'arbitrary will of God, that you shall or shall 'not be saved, *without any respect to your con-'duct*.'* Now setting aside all irritation which might be excited by such a statement of Calvinism,—as our object is truth, and as the best way to it is calm investigation "with

* Refut. p. 226.

meekness and fear;" let us impartially examine this account.

§ 6. The Calvinists, as a general body, believe that the word *covenant* in Scripture (ברית, διαθηκη, *fœdus*) is used, like most other terms, in different acceptations according to the subject and connexion. It often denotes a grant of some privilege, as to Noah, Abraham and his posterity, &c.; and sometimes it signifies the sign or seal by which that grant was represented and confirmed, as the rainbow, circumcision, &c.: but most properly an agreement between two or more parties is expressed by it,—an agreement which is either expressly made, or tacitly implied. In this latter sense we consider the existence of a Covenant between the Father and the Son, respecting human redemption. We think that our blessed Saviour voluntarily engaging to humble himself to become incarnate "for us men and for our salvation," and "obedient unto death, the accursed death of the cross," contained the nature of a federal condition, on the performance of which he acquired a right of suretyship to give eternal life to as many as the Father gave him to be redeemed, to confer "gifts upon men, yea the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." By his acts of humiliation, from the womb to the grave, being in every step a

perfect character, he paid a price of redemption, in virtue of which he is invested with all power and authority in heaven and earth.

§ 7. We also believe that a Covenant was *implied* between God and the first Man. The Condition of it was perseverance in that state of rectitude in which he was created. The first transgression was a breach of Covenant; and consequently the favours which depended on the condition were forfeited. The nature of the case excluded the possibility of this or a similar Covenant with man to be repeated, except with one who was originally free from sin. Hence the necessity, the conditional necessity, of the immaculate conception of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, and of his continuing "holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners:" and hence he received the Spirit without measure, not only for himself but for others. Out of his fullness, who is made head over all things to his church, all his spiritual members receive, "and grace for grace."

§ 8. That God entered into Covenant with Abraham and his posterity the Jews, needs no formal evidence. The condition of it was willing obedience; and while the benefits of compliance were many, the threatenings for non-

compliance were awful and tremendous. Merciful promises were interwoven with the whole Mosaic code, and in no instance were they exempt from performing the equitable conditions, including faith and repentance, love and obedience. The Christian church also is dealt with in the way of a Covenant, with conditions and sanctions. The basis of it, as addressed to mankind, is divine mercy testified, in virtue of our blessed Saviour's adequate price of redemption. The conditions are,—if we would obtain pardon, it must be on our unfeigned repentance; if we would be justified, it must be on our believing with the heart God's testimony concerning Jesus; if we would be saved, it must be in the way of unreserved obedience to God's revealed will; if we would be happy, it must be in the way of holiness. This is our notion of a covenant and its conditions. Now what is there in this Calvinistic system 'incon-'sistent with the idea of a covenant?' The mischief, it seems, lurks out of sight. But what is it? When all were disabled by sin to perform the conditions equitably required, we further hold, that some are *enabled* to perform the required conditions by *special favour* and *purpose*. God foresaw that all with one consent would fail in performing them, if left to themselves, with nothing more than promises and sanctions, or a declaration of an all-sufficient Saviour,

blessings on compliance, and misery on refusal; and therefore determined that the covenant should not be without effect. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do my pleasure." "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."

§ 9. That God was pleased, under different dispensations, 'to promise reward to the obe-' dient, and to threaten punishment to the dis-' obedient,' is so very plainly taught in scripture, that no person of common understanding is ever likely to controvert it; beside that the equity of the case carries its own evidence of propriety. Destitute as Calvinists may be of penetration in other things, and especially the moderns, 'the enthusiasts of the present day,'* they are very willing to admit the idea of a Covenant, and of course the 'conditions' which belong to it. They also can distinguish between a promise and a purpose; and that the former is never connected, properly speaking, with 'cer-' tain and infallible salvation' to any who 'shall 'not comply with the expressed conditions.' Much less do they suppose that 'absolute and 'inevitable perdition is threatened to any num-' ber, or to any description, of persons, except as

* Refut. p. 171.

'they shall not comply with the expressed con-
'ditions.' And yet his Lordship roundly asserts, that 'the very idea of a Covenant is inconsist-
'ent with the Calvinistic system!' But how? Because, he thinks, 'absolute decrees *reject* all
'conditions.'—'Absolute decrees say, that it
'is irreversibly determined by the arbitrary will
'of God, that you shall or shall not be saved,
'*without any respect to your conduct.*'

§ 10. I am very willing that his Lordship's objections should have all the force that can be imagined in this argument, without any palliation or concealment, in hope that the answer to it will be received with equal candour. Do absolute decrees 'reject' all conditions? It is a plain fact, recorded by divine inspiration, that God had purposed or '*decreed*' that the crew who sailed with St. Paul in his voyage to Rome, should, with himself, remain in safety. "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as he told me."—Here is not only a decree, but one *revealed;* but does it

'reject all conditions;' No, for St. Paul very rationally and *consistently* "said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*"* If his Lordship supposes that Calvinists cannot distinguish between a conditional and an absolute decree, he may be under a mistake. We believe that the decree, for instance, of creating the first chaos was absolute, for non-existence could furnish no condition. But the decree to *adorn* existing matter was conditional, because without the condition of substance, there could be no form. Every series or chain of events decreed, implies that one link is to be connected with the other;—nor can we admit that free-will is qualified to charm away or to dissolve this connexion, for these reasons, among many others: first, because the infinite wisdom and power of the Decreer is sufficient to maintain it: secondly, because nothing is decreed by God but good, which is therefore worthy of all his perfections: thirdly, because no link in a chain of events can start into existence and occupy its place without an adequate cause: fourthly, because the will itself (though absolutely free from constraint to evil, as well as restraint from good,) is a link of the decreed chain: to which we may add fifthly, that there is no good volition but what is the

* Acts xxvii. 22—25, 31.

effect of a good principle, nor any good principle in a creature but what is from the will of God, and consequently from his purpose or decree.

§ 11. In every series of decreed events, the last of the series, as to the order of operation, is founded on the condition of the orderly existence of the events preceding. Suppose, for instance, that God has decreed a series of events relative to an individual, the last of which is the enjoyment of himself in heaven. But this is executed under the indispensable condition of holiness; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." He has therefore decreed that he shall be holy. But no man can be holy without a vital union to Christ, the true vine, as an indispensable condition. He has therefore decreed this union, and every connecting link of events preceding (worthy of his formation) till we arrive at his first existence. How then can we be said to hold the decree of happiness without conditions?

§ 12. Will any one object, that this series of decreed events is not a *Covenant?* I grant it; but the Bishop's objection to our sentiments is that they reject all 'conditions,' and I have shewn that our view of decrees does not reject all conditions. But it may be said, that he

admits of conditional decrees, but rejects those that are absolute. I reply, that the same event may be absolutely decreed in one respect, while conditionally in another. Thus human happiness may be absolutely decreed, though the condition of faith and obedience precede it; because the condition itself may be decreed with the same absolute certainty. We do not hold, but rather abhor the sentiment which his Lordship imputes to us, 'that it is irreversibly determined by the 'arbitrary will of God, that you shall or shall 'not be saved, *without any respect to your 'conduct*.' Our sentiment is, that if it be irreversibly determined by the arbitrary will, or the sovereign pleasure, of God, directed by infinite wisdom and mercy, that any one shall be saved, it is no less irreversibly determined that salvation shall be attained by a right conduct. We hold that every preceding step of the means and conditions connected with the end, is as absolutely secured by God's decretive will, as the end itself.

§ 13. That a *federal condition* is not incompatible with an absolute decree of its fulfilment, which is the precise point in question, is capable of undeniable proof from acknowledged facts. It must be acknowledged, that Jesus Christ, by his voluntary obedience unto death, performed a federal condition, without which his exaltation

could not follow; and yet who will say, that his exaltation was not absolutely decreed? Here is a series of decreed events, the end of which is Christ's heavenly glory; the condition of it was, his perfect obedience unto death; the condition of that, his incarnation. If his incarnation was not absolutely decreed, neither could his exaltation and glory as Mediator be so decreed. This decidedly proves, not only that one event depending upon another, as an indispensable condition, may be absolutely decreed, or irreversibly determined, but also that an intervening part of the series of events may be a federal condition performed by a voluntary agent, and consequently by the exercise of Free-Will. If the will of "the man Christ Jesus," than which none could be more free, formed a link in the chain of events, by his voluntary obedience, without which the end, the reward of a glorious exaltation, could not be attained, can any argument be more conclusive than this, that 'absolute decrees' *do not* 'reject all conditions' of a covenant?

§ 14. If it be urged, that the man Jesus was assisted by his divine nature to perform the condition, I admit this in its amplest force; nay, further, his human nature *required* that assistance, in order to perform with absolute certainty the stipulated condition,—and this proves, that

an absolute decree to give assistance whereby the condition may be infallibly performed, is *not* 'inconsistent with the idea of a Covenant.' "Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and *will hold thine hand*, and *will keep thee*, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."*—"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath *anointed* me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn: to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."†

§ 15. On the passages above cited I would offer a few remarks which appear to me to have

* Isa. xlii. 5, 6. † Isa. lxi. 1, 2.

a strong bearing on the point under discussion. First, that they relate to the Messiah in his federal capacity: secondly, that they express a purpose 'irreversibly determined by the arbi-'trary will of God,' to give assistance for performing the conditions of a Covenant, and not merely as a reward upon the performance: thirdly, that the Messiah, thus divinely assisted to perform *his* condition of a stipulated Covenant, should also assist others to obtain that holiness which is to them the federal condition of happiness: fourthly, that these prophetic declarations (to which more might have been added) are abundantly confirmed and illustrated by parallel declarations in the New Testament; for there we are assured that "he received not the Spirit by measure," and the very existence of his humanity was from the Holy Spirit by a decretive determination,—and yet his assumption of humanity was a part of the federal condition.

§ 16. From these considerations we may safely infer, that Bishop TOMLINE had not sufficiently considered the subject, nor the sentiments of Calvinists, when he asserted, that 'the 'very idea of a Covenant is inconsistent with 'the Calvinistic system'—and that 'absolute de-'crees reject all conditions'—or even 'any 'respect to conduct.' We have seen that the

decree of an ultimate event may be absolutely certain, though a condition precede it; and that the same remark is applicable to each event in the series. We therefore contend, on the firmest ground, first, that a 'decree' of absolute Election to glory, does not *reject* but include conditional events preceding the ultimate ones: secondly, that divine, effectual *assistance*, absolutely securing a performance of the conditions by the federates, is perfectly consistent with the idea of a covenant: and, finally, that though pardon, justification, and eternal salvation, be suspended on the conditions of repentance, faith, and obedience to be performed by us, yet the reward may be consistently bestowed, no withstanding it be 'irreversibly determined' by the merciful and wise Jehovah, that his gracious and powerful assistance shall secure the performance of the condition and the ultimate event.

§ 17. His Lordship would fain persuade his readers, that an *exhortation* to walk worthily, is incompatible with certainty of salvation. 'St. 'Peter says, "Give diligence to make your call-'ing and election sure: for if ye do these things 'ye shall never fall:" therefore the salvation of 'these elect, of this chosen generation, was so 'far from being certain that it depended on 'their own diligence; their "not falling" was 'so far from being infallibly decreed that it

'depended upon their doing those things which 'the apostle commanded.'* Of St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, it is observed, 'instead of 'representing their salvation as *certain*, he 'earnestly *exhorts* them to walk worthy of the 'vocation wherewith they were called; *guards* 'them against those deceits which bring down 'the wrath of God upon the children of disobe-'dience, &c.'† 'The Thessalonians by embrac-'ing Christianity, were now enabled to obtain 'salvation; but that this salvation was not '*certain* and infallible, is evident from the 'numerous *exhortations* and *precepts* contained 'in these epistles.'‡ The preceding discussions are virtually a reply to this objection. An exhortation, it is evident, is intended to furnish the person exhorted with a suitable motive of action: and as rational beings are not expected to act without a motive, so the obedience exhorted to, which is a prerequisite to attain the end, requires the exhortation as an essential part of a suitable motive.

§ 18. But so apt are we, when discussing moral and religious subjects, to use terms in a a lax and undefined manner, that the following question may be thought by many readers quite superfluous, What is MOTIVE?—However, I do

* Refut. p. 205. † Ib. p. 207 ‡ Ib. p. 210.

not think it superfluous to explain my *own* meaning when I use the term in an argument that requires precision of ideas. By MOTIVE I understand, that which actually moves and determines the free will of an agent to one choice rather than another. Is any thing beside the exhortation and the will required to effect this? Yes: for the will, however free, must in its elections either move itself, or be moved by something else, in order to comply with, or to reject the exhortation. If it move itself, it is both the mover and thing moved; that is, it is at once both cause and effect. It has been often imagined by those who oppose Calvinism in this point, that the human Will is a self-moving power resembling the self-moving power of the divine Will, which, as they suppose, has no other cause of its activity and choice than itself: but it appears to me demonstrable, that the divine will is not of that character. For what is divine will, in accurate conception, but the medium of power? *Power* therefore moves the divine will. Even power however is never exerted, nor can consistently be conceived to be exerted, without a moving cause. And what can there be in God anterior, as to the order of our conception, to will and power, but his *nature* as infinitely good and wise?

§ 19. Now, if the divine will be not a self-moving principle, much less is the human. The

human will, as well as the divine, is the medium of active power, of which God is the proper source, without whose voluntary energy, there is no conceivable cause of its continuance. A *self-determining human will*, therefore, is a complete absurdity. But what does actually determine or move it to action? In a word, what is it beside the exhortation that constitutes the *motive?* We have proved it cannot be the will itself; it must, therefore, be some radical principle of prior consideration. The radical source, of all active power, or agency, is God; and this power, as flowing from him, is good, since nothing but good can possibly proceed from infinite goodness. Nevertheless, this power in a creature, as well as the will, stands *related* to defectibility, and the negative cause of that defectibility, as essential to a limited and dependent being; and the same active power *may* stand related to the indefectibility of God, by participation, in such a manner and degree, that the tendency of defectibility may be counteracted. Here, then, we see that the human will, which is a *medium* of power, and the power itself which directs it, stand related to two principles,—the cause of defectibility, and the cause of indefectibility; but not in the same respect. The cause of the former, is inseparable from our limited nature; the cause of the latter, is in God, and at *his* disposal, not our own,—for to sup-

pose a dependent nature to be *essentially* related to the cause of indefectibility, is the same as to say, that indefectibility is essentially related to a defectible being, which is incompatible.

§ 20. Hence we perceive, that the human will *may* be the medium of active power in producing good or evil, according as it stands *related* to either of the fore-mentioned principles. While under the influence of God, the cause of indefectibility, the effect must be good; but while under the influence of the cause of defectibility, which is a negative principle, the effect will be evil,—each in a moral sense. The former principle is from God, the latter from ourselves. These are essential constituent parts of motive, in a good or bad choice respectively. The other constituent part of a motive, is the objective consideration that solicits the will through the medium of the understanding. If objective considerations constituted the *whole* of a motive, every will would be moved alike; and indeed endless absurd consequences would follow: and, on the other hand, if the principle constituted the whole of a motive, all 'exhortations,' persuasions, and solicitations of the will, the heart, or active power, through the medium of the understanding, would be superfluous; which is contrary to universal experi-

ence, acknowledged propriety, and the nature of things.

§ 21. The way is now prepared to meet the objections of his Lordship fairly and directly. '*Exhortations*' to diligence, &c., constitute an essential part of motive; for they point out considerations which solicit the will, and which, according to their nature, have a tendency to move it: but these considerations actually move the will, as to compliance or non-compliance, good or evil, according to the nature of the principle, which is the other essential part of the motive. For the exhortation is addressed *alike* to those who are under the influence of each of those essential principles; consequently, if we take away what is common to both, the remainder of the motive in each case will be the principle. If the principle be good, the exhortation to obedience will be successful in proportion; but if the principle be evil, that is, either morally evil or negatively defective, it will not be successful. Without motives, of which objective considerations addressed to the free agent, constitute an essential part, the will is not actually moved to choose either good or evil; and where there is no choice of good, there can be no active compliance or obedience. Where there is no compliance with and obedience to the will of God, there can be no arrival

at that state of happiness which is the end of obedience. He, therefore, who would be finally blessed, must seek it by obedience to the will of God. Consequently, exhortation is one event in the series of divine decrees, without which the last, eternal happiness, cannot be rationally expected.

§ 22. The Bishop observes, in a note, that 'the Apostle could not call upon the Christian 'converts *to make an infallible decree sure.*'* But why could he not? Even supposing that St. Peter did not mean "their calling and Election *sure*" in their own apprehension, or to the satisfaction of their own mind; might not the holy 'diligence' be a part of the infallible decree, and the apostle's 'exhortation' an essential part of the prevailing motive to it? To imagine that the certainty or infallibility of an event, rejects those very means which are *appointed* to render that event certain or infallible, is of all conceits the most unreasonable. Suppose it were apprehended by the father of a young man of family and genius in the established church, that God had revealed to him his having 'infallibly decreed' that his son should be advanced to an archiepiscopal see, through the medium of piety, learning, and

* Refut. p. 205.

worthy conduct; would there be any inconsistency, rather would there not be the utmost propriety and good reason, in the father exhorting the son to piety, learning, and worthy conduct, as things inseparably connected with the ultimate event so much valued; would not his neglect, under the pretence of an infallible decree, be regarded as highly censurable?

§ 23. Yet, it may be urged, is it not possible that one person may neglect his duty, or that another may not comply with reasonable motives; what then becomes of a revealed *infallible decree?* This objection is very weak, and the proper answer to it is plain. If the former finally neglect his duty, or the latter through non-compliance finally fail of attaining the end; the event would prove that the supposed revelation was not from God, who is incapable of declaring a future event to be certain, which proves in fact to be the contrary. But if the event corresponded with the supposed revelation, it is clear that the duty of the one, and the compliance of the other, were included. God is never at a loss to accomplish his purposes, as all hearts are in his hand, and at his disposal. If he determine to preserve his church against the gates of hell, to call into his fold the fulness of the Gentiles, or to bring in the scattered seed of Abraham, he can prepare and animate suitable

instruments to accomplish his design, and effectually dispose the heart to comply with the exhortations. And a revelation of the *certainty* of such an event would be a powerful motive to any heart subject to his holy influence, for a more vigorous exertion in promoting its accomplishment. This was eminently the case with his holy apostles and evangelists. In proportion as they were certain respecting God's fixed purpose to set up a spiritual kingdom among men, or to advance any of the human race to eternal glory, the more ardent was their zeal, and the more unwearied were their endeavours.

§ 24. In the course of this Examination it has been if I mistake not, abundantly proved: 1. That the faculty of Will, whether in God or a creature, is not a radical power, but only a *medium* of power: 2. That it is not a self-determining faculty, but is determined by motives: 3. That every motive, which determines the free agent to act, choose, or prefer, consists of two essential parts, *viz.* the object to be chosen or rejected, and the principle: 4. That the radical principles which determine the character or moral quality of actions, as good or bad, are two, and can be two only, primarily considered, *viz.* the negative cause of defectibility, which cannot belong to God, and the positive cause

of indefectibility, which belongs to him essentially: 5. That the influence of the indefectible principle is at the sovereign disposal of God, which influence is no more claimable by the creature than any other favour which is in fact not granted him: 6. That when God is pleased, in goodness and wisdom, to grant this influence to man's heart, that renewal of the heart and mind takes place which constitutes a gracious principle: It follows, 7thly, that as the principle constitutes the whole of the difference in both motives, (the objective part being common to both,) the *successful* effect must be *as* the principle, which is the fruit of divine gracious operation.

§ 25. Known unto God are all his own operations, all principles produced by them, all negative principles counteracted, all objective means afforded to men, and where any motive will prove efficient, as well as where any inefficient. These are not conjectural opinions, but demonstrable verities. The holy scriptures indeed furnish the *data*, without which no human ingenuity or power of reasoning could avail us; but with their aid, throwing light on the character of God and the real state of mankind, the conclusions fairly drawn are no less certain than those of mathematical science. And from the whole of this part of the subject, we may

draw these general inferences: first, that the Calvinistic doctrine of Election is perfectly consistent with exhortations, invitations, cautions, warnings, threatenings, &c.: secondly, that gracious influence, which is at the sovereign disposal of divine goodness and wisdom, absolutely secures the event, eternal glory, notwithstanding all possible freedom of the agent: thirdly, that personal election originates, not in the free will of man, but in the good and wise pleasure of God,—"that no flesh might glory in his presence:" fourthly, that as personal election does injury to no one, the character of God therein appears infinitely amiable and merciful: fifthly, that the opposers of personal and certain election, can obtain no conceivable advantage by any scheme of their own, either as it relates to the character of God or the happiness of men.

§ 26. Suppose, for argument' sake, that there were no such thing as personal election; what could be gained by the supposition? Would no men continue wicked, or would more of mankind attain happiness? Both parties allow that "wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction," and that "many are they that go in thereat;" and, on the other hand, that in fact, "straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and

few there be that find it." On any scheme of thought whatever, the *fact* is the same. The question then returns to this, what scheme gives most advantage in dealing with men, as to their immortal concerns, and reflects most honour on the character of God?—or, which amounts to the same thing, what do the sacred oracles teach us on the subject? No one is at liberty to interpret one part at the expense of another: and the appeal is now made to every competent reader, whether Bishop TOMLINE's scheme does not set up one train of thought contained in the scripture at the expense of another equally important; and whether the doctrine of *election*, as previously explained, be not consistent with scripture, consistent with itself, and consistent with the Articles of the Established church.

§ 27. His Lordship supposes, that the Predestination taught in the seventeenth Article, is God's gracious *purpose* to make a *conditional offer* of salvation to men. ' " Those whom God hath ' *chosen* in Christ," that is, those to whom God ' *decreed to make known the gospel of Christ.*'— " They be called according to God's purpose, ' *by his Spirit working in due season:* they *through* ' *grace obey* the calling: they be justified *freely:* ' they be made the sons of God by adoption: ' they be *made like the image* of his only-begot- ' ten Son Jesus Christ: they *walk religiously* in

'good works; and at length *by God's mercy* 'they attain to everlasting felicity," that is, 'they *on their part* conform to the conditions 'of the gospel covenant by *obeying* the calling, 'and *walking religiously* in good works, under 'the influence and assistance of the Holy 'Spirit; and, *as a reward*, they are justified 'in this world, are made sons of God, by 'adoption, are made like the image of Christ, 'and at length attain everlasting felicity. Pre-'destination to life therefore is not an absolute 'decree of eternal happiness to certain indivi-'duals, but a gracious purpose of God, *to make* '*a conditional offer* of salvation to men, through 'the merits of Christ." '* Surely never was there an Article so inflexibly opposite to the opinion of its expositor! "Those whom God hath chosen in Christ;" that is, according to his Lordship, 'those to whom God decreed to 'make known the gospel of Christ.' If this be the true exposition, the compilers must mean, that those to whom God 'decreed to make known the gospel of Christ,' or, to make a conditional offer of salvation, "*obey* the calling," are "justified freely," are "made the sons of God by adoption," are "made like the image of Jesus Christ;" that "they walk religiously in good works, and at length by God's mercy,

* Refut. p. 266.

they attain to everlasting felicity!" Are there not millions to whom the gospel is made known, and to whom is made a conditional offer of salvation, who are utter strangers to these effects? How then could the compilers say that these effects are found in those who are "endued with so excellent a benefit of God" as "predestination to life," without pointedly contradicting an obvious matter of acknowledged fact?

§ 28. The question is not whether 'God 'decreed to make known the gospel of Christ,' or, 'graciously purposed to make a conditional 'offer of salvation to men through the merits of 'Christ,' or, whether any '*on their part* conform 'to the conditions of the gospel covenant by obey-'ing the calling, and walking religiously in good 'works;' for these things are confessed on both sides. The question is, what is the *real cause* of these effects? or, what God does on his part? Men "obey the calling;" but from what cause? Is it an inexplicable self-determining power in the will, or is it grace in the heart,—the power of man, or the Spirit of God "working in due season?" They are "justified;" but do they obtain this great privilege "as a reward," or "freely?" They are "made the Sons of God by adoption;" but where does this privilege originate? in the will and purpose of man, or in the wise choice of God? The question is

not, whether the privilege belongs to the willing and obedient; but, who made them willing and obedient? Was it free will in the adopted, or, the grace of God? That the elect are "made like the image of Christ," is not disputed; but does man effect it by the potent energy of *self*, self-will, self-determination,—or, does God effect it by his grace and spirit, whereby they are "transformed into the same image from glory to glory?" The elect 'walk 'religiously in good works.' No Calvinist denies this; but we "affirm constantly, that they who believe in God should be careful to maintain good works," and that the disciples of Christ ought "to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded them." We "charge those who are rich in this world, to be rich in good works;" and that all Christians should be found "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," according to their situations. Now the question is, when Christians have 'walked religiously in good works,' to what are we taught to ascribe this effect? How should we give unto man the things that are his, and unto God the things that are God's? If man was the willing agent, was it his own *will* made him willing; or was it "God that worked in him both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure?"

§ 29. True Christians 'at length attain to

'everlasting felicity;' and I have no objection to add, that they are 'rewarded,'—not of merit, however, but "by God's mercy." But how passed the inhabitants of heaven successfully through this wonderful process, the whole series of events, from the first moment of their lives to their enjoyment of 'everlasting felicity?' Not to mention their first existence as rational beings, their preservation in life, and that in the wise providence of God they were placed in favourable situations as to religious privileges; we will suppose that God has 'decreed to make known to them the gospel of 'Christ,' and 'to make a conditional offer of 'salvation to them.' Now, God having done all this on his part, let us see what more is to be done, in order 'to attain eternal felicity.' Jehovah proclaims by his servants, "Incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel." "Incline your ears to the words of my mouth." But man by nature is "inclined to evil:" and as he cannot incline contrary ways at the same time, there must be some *cause* of a change of inclination from evil to good. This is the first difficulty. The thing is not impossible, else no one could be saved. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such," observes the Article upon Free-Will, "that he cannot [which is the same as will not] turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good

works, to faith and calling upon God." But what is impossible with men is possible with God: and when he has been pleased to effect this change of inclination, the true converts are constrained to acknowledge, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth." "He hath made us willing in the day of his power." One of the best passages in the Book I am examining is the following: 'A man *cannot*, by his 'own natural faculties and unassisted exertions, 'so counteract and correct the imperfection and 'corruption derived from the fall of Adam, as 'to be *able of himself* to acquire that true and 'lively faith which would secure his salvation, 'or to call upon God with that sincerity, fer-'vour, and devotion, which can alone give effi-'cacy to our prayers. The human mind is so 'weakened and vitiated by the sin of our first 'parents, that we *cannot* by our own natural 'strength *prepare* it, or *put it into a proper* '*state*, for the reception of a saving faith, or for 'the performance of the spiritual worship re-'quired in the gospel: this mental purification '*cannot* be effected *without divine assistance*.'*

§ 30. 'Without divine assistance.' The term 'assistance' which the Bishop not infrequently uses in reference to God, or the Holy

* Refut. p. 54.

Spirit, is extremely equivocal, as applicable to very different and almost opposite ideas. The effectual 'assistance' which a vigorous parent gives to a helpless child, differs much from the occasional and feeble 'assistance' which an aged parent affords to a son who is qualified to take the lead in every important undertaking. A fisherman, after having hoisted the sail of his boat, is 'assisted' by the wind; and he again *assists* the wind by the skilful plying of his oars. In short, the phrase 'divine assistance' may be used in a lax way by persons of contrary sentiments, as to the *nature* and *degree* of that assistance. It is true, there is a co-operation between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man, and this is fully admitted by his Lordship, though he professes that he cannot account for it. 'In 'what manner, or in what proportion, if I may 'so say, God and man co-operate, I am utterly 'unable to explain or discover.'* I will venture an opinion, however, that the subject itself is neither undiscoverable, nor inexplicable;—and that the obscurity is not in his Lordship's intellect, but in some false principle that hangs over the subject as an impenetrable veil. As long as any one clings to a principle so useless, so unmeaning, so self-contradictory and demonstrably absurd, as that of free-will being a self-

* Refut. p. 35.

determining power, under whatever terms that principle may be couched, it is by no means hazardous to predict that he *never can* 'explain 'or discover in what manner or in what pro-'portion God and man co-operate.' Let the incrustation formed by this false principle—an assumption no less degrading to the human mind that adopts it, than affronting to the spirit of truth and grace—let this covering be removed (and may it be removed from every mind,) and the glorious truth will shew itself. God is the source of all active power; from him "every good gift, and every perfect gift" proceedeth: he is the author of every good principle in the moral as well as in the natural world. But the will of man, as well as every other will, is determined by some principle; and when to an act morally good, by a good principle. Consequently, God, according to his purpose and grace, is the sole and exclusive cause of every motive that actually determines a free agent to choose and act virtuously. Of every thought, desire, effort, exertion, and operation, that is *truly good*, God is the true parent, "according to the counsel of his own will." If our work be good, it is *because* God worketh in us; for except his operation in us were good, our works would be certainly evil. But as no evil principle of action can possibly proceed from him; the evil of our work is exclusively our own.

§ 31. In the face of so much evidence to the contrary, the Bishop draws this general inference respecting the 17th Article: 'It 'appears, then, that the Calvinistic doctrines of 'Election and Reprobation are not only *not* '*maintained in this Article*, but that they are '*disclaimed and condemned in the strongest* '*terms*.'* To some parts of this remarkable sentence, in a divided sense, I do not object. For instance, it does not appear that the doctrine of *reprobation*, as taught by CALVIN, and some others distinguished by his name, is maintained in this Article. But to say that the Calvinistic doctrine of *election* 'is not maintained 'in this Article,' is to overstep the bounds of polemical candour, and offend against the ingenuity that is solicited to make the assertion plausible. But through what medium did the Bishop view the Article when he concluded in his mind, and communicated by his pen, that in it Election is '*disclaimed* and *condemned*,' in the strongest terms?' Where is even Reprobation 'condemned,' much less in 'the strongest 'terms?' If we deal in assertions without proofs, we may boldly affirm that red is blue, or that white is black.

§ 32. In what manner, however, does his

* Refut. p. 269.

Lordship attempt to prove that the Predestination of the 17th Article is not Calvinistic? I hesitate, and enquire, Is it possible for a learned prelate to choose for his middle term, his own assumed sense of the Article? The sentence of Predestination he has been considering, it seems, is that 'by which God purposed and decreed 'to save all who shall believe and obey the 'gospel,' a 'merciful and consolatory doctrine!' But the Calvinistic Predestination is attended with 'much mischief and danger:' Therefore, the Calvinistic doctrine of Election is not intended in the Article. This is, truly, not a common mode of arguing with convincing reasoners,—and indeed is much about as admissible as the following: The Calvinistic doctrine that secures the happiness of *some*, "is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons:" But the Tomlinistic Predestination which consists in 'making known the gospel of Christ,' and in 'making a conditional offer of salvation 'to men,' without any purposed certainty of salvation to *any* individuals, must be most gloomy and dreadful; because on this plan it is possible, if not probable, or even certain, that no human being will ever be saved: Therefore, the 17th Article which administers comfort, is *for* the Calvinists and *against* his Lordship!

§ 33. There are two points totally overlooked,

which yet ought to be ascertained in order to an accurate view of the Article. First, whether the compilers had in view *two kinds* of predestination, one full of comfort, and the other tending to desperation: next, whether the very *same kind* of Predestination may not be to the godly pleasant and comfortable, but to the "carnal and curious," the reverse. I see no reason to infer, that the compilers referred to any other doctrine than that which they thought to be necessarily included in "Predestination to life." Yet I think it highly probable, that they were not free from the prevailing, though unfounded, sentiment, that predestination to life *implied* a predestination to death, although they very prudently did not express it. Whatever were their views of *reprobation*, however, they say nothing about it. The Article expressly treats of Predestination to *life*, which clearly must be the same as Election. Now if they had respect to two kinds of Predestination, one to *life* and the other to *death*, and if they thought these 'inseparable,'—one is expressed and the other implied. Godly persons dread neither part, and "curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ," can find no comfort in either. Those "who love God, and are the called according to his purpose," know that "all things work together for their good:" but the ungodly, who neither love God nor have the Spirit of Christ,

are disposed to quarrel with the conduct of Providence, with the divine purposes, and indeed with the divine Perfections,—and if so, it is no wonder if they quarrel with themselves, and rush either into desperation and suicide, " or into wretchedness of most unclean living." It must be remembered, however, that a far greater proportion of those who run into such wickedness and folly, are the *opposers* of Calvinism. And it further deserves to be recollected, that no one is supposed by the Article to abuse the doctrine, but " curious and carnal persons;" who also abuse the bounties of Providence, only by slower steps, to their everlasting ruin.

§ 34. I will now add, that the " Predestination to life" maintained in this volume, is precisely the same as what is *expressed* in the 17th Article. But if the framers of it believed, as the Bishop of Lincoln professes to do, that a decree of Election is 'inseparable' from a decree of Non-Election, I differ from them as well as his Lordship, for reasons before adduced. If there be any thing terrific in the sound of Predestination, it must be from false associations; whereby persons darkly ascribe to God's purpose the *evil* no less than the good. Let this mist of error roll away, and the doctrine appears as cheering as the sun, from which proceed neither cold nor darkness, but light, and warmth, and

vivifying influence. What advantage can the Bishop's view offer, which this does not comprehend? None. This includes no evil any more than his; but it includes more good. Does he hold a decree 'to make known the gospel 'of Christ,' and 'a gracious purpose of God, to 'make a conditional offer of salvation to men, 'through the merits of Christ?' So do we. Does he discard a purpose of excluding any? So do we. What then is the difference? His Lordship's predestination denies any divine influence that shall make the salvation of any individual *certain;* a doctrine assuredly fraught with the most dismal gloom, and inexpressibly degrading to the mercy and grace of God! Ours, on the contrary, while it takes away nothing, but allows every natural faculty, and religious advantage indiscriminately, which the other can possibly require, *ensures* the spiritual vivification, the renovation, the holiness, the voluntary and cordial obedience of *some.* And who are these? The very same persons as those whom the Bishop acknowledges will be saved! There is no dispute about how many, or how few. They are precisely those to whom the Judge will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." On both schemes, the Calvinistic and the Anticalvinistic, they who 'attain to ever-'lasting felicity' are identically the same. On

both schemes, men must have the same qualifications for heaven, and all shall be judged according to their works. "They that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." We desire none to be brought to heaven in virtue of Predestination or Election, but those who are actually suitable in their state, temper, and conduct, to see God and to enjoy him for ever; in short, none but those who shall be introduced by the final judge. These we call the Elect: they reckon themselves, when they have done all, unprofitable servants, and cry out, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name give praise." Had it not been for thy discriminating mercy and special grace, we should never have inherited these realms of 'everlasting felicity.'

§ 35. His Lordship supposes that there was *no difference* between Judas and the other apostles, except good works. 'If the Calvinists 'say, that Judas was never in reality one of the 'elect, we may ask, what proof they can bring 'of *any difference* between him and the other eleven apostles except *works?*'* What we say is, that as Judas is not in heaven, he was not *elected* to be there; and all who are there,

* Refut. p. 209.

or ever shall be there, attained to that end, and to all the requisite steps leading to it, in virtue of a divine purpose, or "the election of grace." We allow that Judas was, in another sense, one of the elect; he was *chosen* to be an apostle, he was endowed with apostolic gifts, he was favoured with extraordinary privileges, and probably did many wonderful *works* in the name of Christ, which were also in a sense 'good,' as conducing to the good of men and the advancement of Christ's kingdom. 'What '*proof* of difference, except *works?*' If by 'works' be meant the root and branches of moral actions, the *principle* as well as the act, all the difference as to his state at any given time was indeed constituted by 'works,' for he had within him the germ of avarice, treachery, and ingratitude. If it be said, that his former good works were an evidence that he once had a good principle; I ask, what good work did Judas ever do which was a decided proof of a good principle of action? Are we to presume that he had it, except we can prove the contrary? What! are we to conclude that men have supreme love to God, and a saving spirit of faith and repentance, until they break forth into dishonesty and treachery? Are there no *hypocrites* in the Church of Christ? And is there *no* 'difference' between a hypocrite and a sincere disciple, until the veil be drawn aside?

§ 36. There was one striking 'difference' between Peter and Judas, as to the divine purpose, independently of 'works.' Peter, having "the root of the matter" in him, notwithstanding his lamentable fall, was still an object of special care and preservation. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have *prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*"* Peter had a spark, or a vital principle of faith, which the force of temptation was not suffered to extinguish. He, of whom it was said that he should "not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, until he brought forth judgment to victory," took a special interest in Peter's recovery. "I have prayed for thee." And what was the subject matter of the prayer? "That thy faith fail not." Now what proof is there that Judas ever had a principle of lively saving 'faith?' Did he ever perform any 'work' that *proved* he was no hypocrite at the time, or that he had the true fear and love of God, with a sincere and decided attachment to Jesus? In short, good works are the best criterion whereby to judge of characters and principles in our intercourse with each other, and this our Lord has clearly sanctioned by his conduct towards Judas;

* Luke xxii. 31, 32.

but it would be erroneous to infer, that there was no difference between Judas and the other apostles, except in '*works*,' in the obvious and natural acceptation of this term, inasmuch as there is abundant *proof* that Jesus, who knew his heart, regarded him as a hypocrite, and a traitor, before any of the other disciples entertained a suspicion of his faithless principle. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who believed not, and who should betray him."* Had Judas possessed a principle of faith like Peter, why not pray for the former as well as the latter? If he never had a faith like Peter's, which was a heavenly gift, as every spiritual principle is, then more had been done for Peter than for Judas, independent of 'works.' To imagine that such a favour was conferred on Peter rather than Judas, on the ground of their different good works foreseen, is subversive of itself; because no works are supposed to exist in future, but what sprung from the favour then conferred. The reward supposed is a good principle, the spirit of faith, without which it is impossible to please God; how then can this faith, without which no works are good, be the reward of good works? But if the difference be not of *works*, it must be of sovereign *grace*; whereby the other apostles were more highly

* John vi. 64.

favoured than Judas, though what he had in common with the others, and wickedly abused, rendered him altogether inexcusable.

§ 37. We are again told, that the *general terms* of God's love are *irreconcilable* with his electing some and *leaving* others to perish. ‘"God so loved the world, that he gave his ‘only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in ‘him should not perish, but have everlasting ‘life." In this and many other passages of the ‘New Testament, relating to the motive and ‘design of Christ's Advent, God's love for the ‘world is declared in *general terms;* and surely ‘these texts are *irreconcilable* with the idea, of ‘God selecting out of mankind a certain num- ‘ber whom he ordained to save, and of his ‘*leaving* the rest of mankind to perish everlast- ‘ingly.’* The difficulty here, is to find out some degree of plausibility in the objection. For what is there *like* inconsistency, between a general love to mankind, and a more special love to some of them, under the direction of unerring wisdom? Love and hatred indeed are irreconcilable, except when used in a comparative sense, as they are often used in scripture; as when hatred denotes a *less degree* of love. Thus a true disciple should "*hate*" (i. e. love in a less

* Refut. p. 195.

degree) his father and mother, &c. for the sake of Christ: and thus God loved Jacob, but did not love Esau to the same degree, or in the same respect. It was a great instance of divine love that God should give his son as an all-sufficient ransom for the sins of mankind; but great as it was, if nothing more were done, every soul of man might perish everlastingly. We have need, in order to have a good hope through grace, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, to be redeemed by *power* as well as by *price*. The sacrifice of Christ is the ransom, but the Spirit of Christ is the redeeming power that makes "free from the law of sin and death."

§ 38. '*Leaving* the rest of mankind to perish 'everlastingly.' Is it conceivable that God *could not* save one soul more than will be eventually saved? Then that soul which will not be found among the saved eventually, will be '*left*' by him to perish everlastingly, on the Bishop's own system. If it be said, that in the latter case it was their own fault, and no arbitrary decree, which denied them the means of salvation; I return precisely the same answer respecting the former case. There is no arbitrary decree, as before shewn at large, to the injury or the annoyance of any portion of God's universe of intelligent beings, (or indeed particle

of created existence of any kind, if that expression be more acceptable,) without previous demerit. If any one of the human race be disposed to go to heaven, on the declaration and assurance of God's *general love* to the world of mankind, I am fully satisfied that there neither is, nor can be, any decree of God to prevent him. Jesus Christ has "opened the kingdom of heaven to all *believers*;" nor is there any decree to prevent any one from believing in Christ as the way to the kingdom. But God, foreseeing that none will believe, repent, obey, or fall in with his general love and proclamation of mercy, if left to themselves, will *ensure* a "seed to serve him," both on earth and in heaven.

§ 39. Finally, his Lordship insists, that election is not *confined* to those who will *actually* be saved. 'The word [elect] is applied generally to collective bodies of Christians, to all 'who in one or more cities or countries professed 'Christianity, without any discrimination; and 'it is not *confined* to individuals who must 'necessarily be saved, or who were predestinated 'by God to certain salvation; or even to those 'who will actually be saved.'* Now, admitting all this, what is the fair inference, but that the

* Refut. p. 206.

word "elect," in common with many others, admits of different significations. There is an election to gospel privileges, to church fellowship and a participation of sacraments, &c.; but this is no argument against an election to partake of special grace and future glory. A choice made of collective bodies, does not exclude another more special choice of individuals among them, who were "redeemed from among men," and from that collective body, to partake of a divine principle, a lively saving faith, to "walk in white," and "by patient continuance in well-doing," to inherit eternal life and glory. —These are his Lordship's principal objections, and virtually the whole of his objections, as far as I can perceive. The reader will judge whether they have been fairly answered.

Chap. IV.

SOME THINGS ARE ASCRIBED BY HIS LORDSHIP, TO CALVINISTS, WHICH ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO THEM.

Sect. I.

Some things are imputed to Calvinists, which belong to NO EXISTING SECT *of Christians.*

§ 1, 2. That the Calvinists *seem* to trust in the grace of Simon Magus; and § 3. To maintain that matter is *incapable* of salvation. § 4. That there are two sorts of men formed by *Angels*. § 5. That some men are good and others bad by *Nature*. § 6. That men have earthly, spiritual, and middle natures. § 7. That some are authorized to sin because of their *perfection*—examined.

§ 1. The Calvinistic reader will probably be surprised to learn from the Bishop of Lincoln, that he is charged with *believing in the grace of Simon Magus!* His Lordship quotes a great number of 'Opinions of earliest Heretics 'greatly resembling the peculiar tenets of Cal-'vinism;' and from the writings of Irenæus this is one notable *proof* of it. '"He says, 'that one of the doctrines of Simon Magus was, 'that those who trust in him [i. e. Simon Ma-'gus] and his Helena, should have no further 'care, and that they are free to do what they 'like; for that men are saved according to his 'grace, [i. e. Simon Magus's grace] but not

'according to just works.'"* 'The assertion of 'Simon Magus, who is mentioned in the Acts 'of the Apostles, and called by ecclesiastical 'historians the first Christian heretic, that 'men 'are saved according to his [i. e. Simon's] grace, 'and not according to just works,' contains in it '*the essence of Calvinism;* and it clearly appears 'that IRENÆUS considered this as an heretical 'opinion.'† Now, I ask the reader, is there any existing sect, is there any individual on the face of the globe, who holds, or is ever likely to hold, this heretical opinion? Does any one professing Christianity in the present day "trust in Simon Magus and his Helena,"—and that men are saved according to "*Simon's grace,*" and not according to just works? Is there any reader of the Refutation so credulous as to believe, that this heretical, monstrous opinion, 'contains 'in it the essence of Calvinism!' Calvinists indeed believe and profess, that "we are saved by grace," that is, the grace of God, "through faith;" and that all true Christians are "new-created unto good works," in which it is divinely "ordained that we should walk;" and that Jesus Christ is become "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey *him.*"

§ 2. Perhaps his Lordship thought that Cal-

* Refut. p. 515. † Ib. p. 571.

vinists have no access to the works of IRENÆUS, or that such atrocious heretics do not understand Latin! Is it sufficient to constitute the similarity, that both Simon and Calvin adopted the word "Grace" to express their tenets respectively? On this supposition, the Bishop himself cannot easily escape. What however, does IRENÆUS say? "Prophetas autem a mundi fabricatoribus Angelis inspiratos dixisse prophetias: quapropter nec ulterius curarent eos, hi qui *in eum et in Selenen* [vel, Helenam] *ejus spem habeant*, et ut liberos agere quæ velint: secundum enim *ipsius gratiam* salvari homines, sed non secundum operas justas."* That is, "That the prophets uttered their predictions as inspired by angels, who are the creators of the world: wherefore, they who trust in *him* and in *his Helena* need no further care; and, being free, they may act as they please: moreover, that men are saved according to *his grace*, but not according to just works." Here is not one word about the *grace of God*, but all about the *grace of Simon Magus*, and of *his Helena*, a Tyrian strumpet that he carried about with him! And as Simon blasphemously declared himself to be "God the Father," so he conferred on this woman the honourable title of "the mother of all!" So much for the heresy of Simon Magus 'greatly

* IRENÆI opera. p. 116. Ed. 1639.

'resembling the peculiar tenets of Calvinism!' *Greatly resembling!*

§ 3. Again, the Calvinists, it seems 'greatly 'resemble' the Valentinians, who asserted, 'that '*matter is incapable* of salvation.'—'For as it is 'impossible that the material should partake of 'salvation (for they say it is *not capable* of it) so 'again it is impossible that the spiritual, meaning 'themselves, should be subject to corruption, 'whatever conduct they pursue.—Wherefore, 'those of them who are the most perfect, do 'without fear all things which are forbidden.'* Calvinistic reader, did ever any mirror give you a more striking resemblance of yourself? As you are so like a Valentinian, of course you cannot believe that Jesus Christ is "the Saviour of the body," or that there is any resurrection of the dead. You must have expunged from your bible and your creed that Jesus Christ will "change this vile body, and make it like unto his glorious body." You must have renounced what the Valentinians (the very image of yourself) considered impossible, viz. that the material part of you should partake of salvation, a salvation of which it is 'not capable.' While you so nearly resemble these heretics, you must hold it an impossibility that you should be sub-

* Refut. p. 513, 514. From IRENÆUS.

ject to corruption of any kind, 'whatever con-
'duct you pursue.' And as you believe your-
self to be one of the most perfect of human
beings, you cannot scruple to "do without fear
all things which are forbidden." But if you dis-
own the resemblance, can you point out any
other existing sect of Christians who bear it?

§ 4. The Calvinists are represented as hold-
ing tenets resembling the heresy of SATURNINUS,
viz. That there are *two sorts of men formed by
angels.* '"He (Saturninus) first asserted, that
'there are *two sorts* of men formed by the
'*angels*, the one good, the other bad. And,
'because demons assist the worst men, that the
'Saviour came to destroy bad men and demons,
'but to save good men."'* This is the whole
of the quotation, and therefore *some* part of it
at least must be intended as a resemblance of
Calvinism. But where shall we find it except
in the first part, without involving the Bishop
himself, who will allow, no doubt, that the
Saviour came to save the good and to destroy
the wicked among men as well as evil spirits;
and that demons assist the worst of men by
diabolical temptations. It remains then, that if
there be any thing peculiar to Calvinism re-
sembling the heresy of SATURNINUS, it must be

* Refut. p. 515. From IRENÆUS.

the formation of *two sorts of men by the angels!* An attempt to defend Calvinism from this charge, would be an insult to the readers' knowledge and common sense. But we may just put the question, Is there any existing sect of Christians that holds an opinion bearing any resemblance to this heresy?

§ *5.* Again, The Calvinists are charged with resembling the heresy of the *Valentinians*, by maintaining, That some men are good and others bad, *by nature.* The following are two complete quotations brought for this purpose. ' " Sub-' dividing souls themselves, they say that some ' are by nature good, and some by nature bad."* ' " They (the Valentinians) say, that some men ' are good by nature, and some bad." '† But where or when have the Calvinists, or even any one of them, maintained any thing resembling this notion? Need I repeat our sentiments, that " God made man upright," but that since the fall of Adam, all his descendants are depraved, and their corrupted nature is " inclined to evil?" We never say, that any men since the first apostacy are by nature "*good.*" If they are made " good," it is by a gracious influence from God. Why excite the odium of one part of Christians against another, by feigning a

* Refut. p. 514. † Ib. 515. From IRENÆUS.

resemblance to the Valentinian heresy, while no sect in the present day bears to it any degree of similarity?

§ 6. The Calvinists are charged with maintaining, That men have *earthly*, *spiritual*, and *middle* natures. ' " When you hear the expres-
' sion ' to whom it is given,' do not adopt any
' heretical notion; do not fancy that there are
' different natures, *earthly*, *spiritual*, and *middle*
' natures. For certain persons are *so ill disposed*,
' as to imagine that some are of a nature which
' must absolutely perish, others of a nature which
' must be saved; and that a third sort are so
' circumstanced, according as their will may
' lead them to vice or to virtue." '* If *any* persons are " so ill disposed," they must of course be the Calvinists of the present day: but as among these we seek in vain for this crude, stale, ancient and long exploded philosophic dogma, among what existing sect of Christians shall we find it? Truly, no where. It has disappeared for many ages, and it is to be expected that it never will reappear, whatever dignified name may attempt to conjure up its ghost.

§ 7. Calvinists must needs be heretics, it

* Refut. p. 522. From GREGORY of Nazianzen.

seems, because they hold, after the example of the odious Basilidians, that they are *authorized to sin* because of their *perfection.* For thus writes CLEMENS of Alexandria: ' " I have ' quoted these words in reproof of the followers ' of BASILIDES, who lead incorrect lives, as per- ' sons who are *authorized to sin because of their* ' *perfection;* or who will certainly be *saved by* ' *nature,* even though they sin now, because of ' an election founded in nature."'* Is it possible for every Calvinistic reader, not instantly to recognize his own likeness in this picture of the Basilidians drawn by CLEMENS, framed and set up by the Bishop of Lincoln, to be viewed by all the world as a ' great resemblance?' Undoubtedly no reprobation can be too severe for those, if any such there are, who with the followers of BASILIDES, " authorize themselves to sin because of their perfection"—that imagine, under whatever pretence, that they "will certainly be *saved by nature.*" But for the Calvinists—his Lordship may rest assured that they abominate the Basilidian fraternity, and these monstrous dogmas, equally with himself. I will venture to affirm indeed that they would find it difficult to point out any other sect of the present age bearing any resemblance to them,—or even to form any charitable guess, how the right

* Refut. p. 517.

reverend prelate came to imagine a resemblance? Seriously, by such modes the pen of controversy becomes an instrument of discord among brethren, and he who employs it, to use a homely but not unapt expression, "lets himself down."

SECT. II.

Some things imputed to Calvinists in a SENSE *which they* DISOWN.

§ 1, 2. That all *Christian graces* are communicated by the sole operation of the Spirit, without any concurrence on the part of Man. § 3. That Faith does not require any *voluntary* steps, or exercise, but is *forced*. § 4. That the control of sinful passions, is *physically* impossible. § 5. That irresistible grace necessarily and solely produces a godly life.

§ 6. That Calvinists lay claim to *private* revelations. § 7. Pretend to instantaneous and forcible conversions. § 8. To the sensible operation of the Spirit. § 9—11. To *Experiences*, as suggestions or perceptions by immediate inspiration.

§ 12. That they maintain *sinless* obedience and *incorrigible* pollution. § 13. That man has no concern in working out salvation. § 14. A moral incapacity tending to melancholy or profligacy. § 15, 16. Preach Faith so as to encourage licentiousness. § 17. Are inconsistent in holding salvation through Faith alone.

§ 1. HIS Lordship imputes to Calvinists this notion,—that all Christian graces are communicated by the sole operation of the Spirit. This he states as one of their positions, as constituting an extreme opposite to the Socinians: 'that faith and all the Christian graces are communicated by the sole and irresistible operation of the Spirit of God, without any endeavour or concurrence on the part of man.'* Our sentiments are not here fairly stated, because the terms 'faith' and 'Christian graces,'

* Refut. p. 2.

are used by us in one sense, and by the Bishop in another. We, according to the scripture, consider "faith" in one sense as the gift of God, and in another, as the duty of man. The spirit of faith, or the spiritual principle, is the gift of God, preventing or preceding, and exciting the will to believe, according to just evidence, the whole testimony of God. But the act of believing that testimony is ours, and implies an "endeavour and concurrence on the part of man." Each of these ideas we, according to the circumstances of the case, express by the word faith: and indeed the scripture authorizes us to use the term as denoting other ideas beside these principal ones; particularly the object believed. The blessed Saviour is called the author and finisher of faith, i. e. the gospel believed by us; and Paul after his conversion is said to preach the *faith* which he once destroyed.

§ 2. Similar distinctions may be made on the term "grace." Thus we maintain that 'Christian graces,' as to the renovating principle, are from the sole operation of the Spirit of God, in contradistinction from the assumed notion of a self-determining power in the human will to renovate the heart; but the *exercised* 'Christian graces' which require a perceived *object* of their existence, imply an 'endeavour

'or concurrence on the part of man.' Thus, it is not the Holy Spirit, but we ourselves, by virtue of his assistance, love God and our neighbour, fear the Lord and the glory of his majesty, trust in him at all times, rejoice with trembling in contemplation of promised blessings and our own impotence amid surrounding dangers, and hope for distant good things promised. And thus St. Paul terms "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," which are exercised 'Christian graces,' "the fruit of the Spirit."* Their origin and principle is from the Spirit, but considered as exercised by us, they are properly ours. The term "grace" is also used frequently in scripture for exhibited favour; as "the grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared unto all men;" "the gospel of the grace of God," &c.

§ 3. In the same manner we fairly meet a great variety of similar insinuations and charges with which the "Refutation" abounds. Among these we might notice, for instance, that believing does not include an act of the will: 'These commands to ask, to seek, and to knock, '*prove*, that our Saviour *required some voluntary* '*steps* to be still taken by those who were

* Gal. v. 22, 23. See also Eph. v. 9.

'already persuaded of the divine origin of the 'doctrines he taught.'* An incautious reader of the "Refutation" might be led to suppose, that the Calvinists deny what is here proved; whereas, in fact, we maintain it not less strenuously than his Lordship. Again: 'We are au- 'thorized to attribute their *faith* to the *volun- 'tary exercise* of their reason.'† What Calvinist ever maintained that "faith," in the sense of believing a testimony, does not include 'the 'voluntary exercise of reason?' Moreover: 'Now it must be allowed, that it is one thing 'to give a man *power* to act, another to *force* 'him to act.' The reader of this remark might be induced to think that the Calvinists held the *latter* idea. We hold, however, no such thing; but, that the Spirit gives the power, while the will acts freely.

§ 4. 'It is only *contended*,' says the Bishop, 'that the temporary or occasional control of 'their sinful passions was never *physically im- 'possible*.'‡ By his Lordship professing to 'con- 'tend' this point, the idea is excited in his reader's mind, that Calvinists hold a 'physical' as contradistinguished from a *moral* impossibility; whereas the contrary is the notorious fact. All the 'impossibility,' we hold, of controlling

* Refut. p. 15. † Ib p. 18. ‡ Ib. p. 9.

sinful passions, is a prevailing criminal indisposition to do so. 'Even St. Paul allowed the '*possibility* of his having received the grace of 'God 'in vain,' and surely the same *possibility* 'must be admitted with respect to all other 'Christians.'* Surely it was very 'possible' both for Paul and 'all other Christians' to "receive the grace of God in vain" IF left to themselves, or to their unassisted free-will. Election does not operate as a charm, to the exclusion of the intermediate steps of "keeping the body under and bringing it into subjection, &c."—'The Spirit *helps*, but does not *compel* us.'† Very true, for in whatever respect we are compelled, in the same respect we are not free; and freedom is essential to accountability. But why should the reader's mind be led to suppose that Calvinists hold, as a part of their creed, a 'compulsion' which is inconsistent with moral agency? To the same effect is the following insinuation: 'By the suggestion therefore, and with the help, of God's grace, we 'endeavour to follow the example of Christ, 'which *shews* that the grace of God *does not* '*act with compulsory force*, but only directs and 'assists our endeavours.'‡ What reader, who was not previously better informed, could avoid supposing that the Calvinists held the absurd

* Refut. p. 32. † Ib. p. 40. ‡ Ib. p. 69.

notion of 'compulsory force' rather than divine *assistance?* They differ indeed from his Lordship, respecting the precedency of that assistance,—but utterly disclaim the notion of 'compulsory force.'

§ 5. 'Were grace *irresistible,*' we are told, 'did it *necessarily* and *solely* produce a *godly life,* 'there would be no room for faithfulness on our 'part.'* Here the words marked in italics appear to be applied to us in a sense which we disown. When we use the word 'irresistible' in connexion with 'grace,' we do not suppose that no kind of resistance may be made to 'grace' in any sense. St. Stephen says to the envious and persecuting Jews, "Ye do alway *resist* the Holy Ghost." They and their forefathers were in the habit of resisting the Holy Ghost, as to his holy words, his holy prophets, his miraculous gifts and operations, the holy tendency of the evidence he afforded, &c. There is a kind of resistance implied in "quenching the Spirit," as to the flame of holy affections of which he is the original cause; and when any temper of mind is indulged, when any thing is done, or any duty omitted which has this tendency, in that respect, and to that degree, the Holy Spirit may be said to be quenched.

* Refut. p. 70.

Throwing water upon a flame may be called quenching it, for that is the real tendency of that act, whatever may be the final result. So Christians are warned against *destroying* a weak brother by uncharitable conduct, for that is the tendency of such conduct,—the very reverse of edification. What we profess, therefore, is, that the operations of the Holy Spirit in the saints, will prove efficacious and victorious, over "the world, the flesh, and the devil," when God *purposes* that event, whatever momentary resistance may be ungratefully made. In this sense Calvinists have sometimes said, that grace is 'irresistible;' though the other terms just mentioned appear more strictly accurate. Whereas the Bishop explains its import by the words '*necessarily* and *solely* producing a *godly life*,' which we disown, except in a qualified sense, a sense perfectly compatible with free-agency and moral obligation. Necessity in the acceptation of certainty, is one thing, but necessity in the acceptation of force or compulsion, is another. And grace 'solely' producing a good principle of action, denotes a very different idea from the same grace producing 'solely' a 'godly life.'

§ 6. The Bishop remarks, that 'the real 'orthodox divine maintains—that every true 'Christian is inspired, enlightened, sanctified,

'and comforted by the Spirit of God.' I am happy to learn from his Lordship's own pen, that the modern Calvinists are 'orthodox,' thus far. But is there not "a fly in their pot of ointment?" For 'the real orthodox divine—'rejects all claim to *private revelation*, all pre-'tensions to *instantaneous* and *forcible* conver-'sion, and to the *sensible* operation of the 'Spirit; in short, he disclaims what in the lan-'guage of modern Calvinists, are called *expe-'riences;* that is, *suggestions* or *perceptions*, 'known and felt to be communicated by the '*immediate* inspiration of God.'* Here indeed many "flies" are brought to buz around the Calvinistic "pot," and it is but too apparent that the Bishop of Lincoln has wasted much of his time and ingenuity in labouring to force them in,—but with little success. For where has his Lordship learnt that Calvinists lay claim to 'private revelations?' We 'reject' the claim in the sense here insinuated. We profess that divine revelation of truth for the use of the church and all its members is complete in the canon of scripture, and that no Christian ought to expect a 'private' revelation of any new truths which are not there revealed. But if by 'revelation' be meant a spiritual discovery of the real meaning of religious truth, as the effect

* Refut. p. 73.

of being 'enlightened' by the Spirit of God; we acknowledge it. But then, does not his Lordship claim the very same for 'the real orthodox divine?'

§ 7. Much has been said of late about '*instantaneous* and *forcible* conversion.' Now granting that any Calvinists have used such phrases in regard to some very rare instances of conversion—as perhaps in the case of Colonel GARDNER, and a few others—is it candid to interpret them capriciously, in a sense never intended by the writers or speakers; nay, in a sense which they explicitly disavow? One is led to suppose from the Bishop's statement, that Calvinists urge the *necessity*, or at least the *importance*, of conversion being 'instantaneous.' But, I appeal to their writings, to their sermons, and to the constant plan of instruction pursued by them in their families, in evidence that they avowedly disclaim any such opinion. That an 'instantaneous' change of heart, and a consequent speedy change of mental operations and of conduct, *may* take place, and in some striking instances actually *do* take place, we frankly acknowledge, as not incompatible with the real state of man, nor with the gracious power of him "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness." The gracious pleasure of the Almighty is not to be limited by the precon-

ceived opinions of puny mortals. Far be it from us to prescribe to the Allwise God, *when* he must influence the minds of his creatures, or how instantaneously or gradually. We regard it as of incomparably greater importance to turn men's attention to their own hearts and lives, "to examine themselves whether they are in the faith," and to walk worthy of their "professed subjection to the gospel of Christ." And as to '*forcible* conversion,' in the obnoxious sense intended in the objection, we reject the sentiment; while we plead that conversion, whether slow or sudden, is an effect of divine gracious power influencing the heart.

§ 8. It is further objected to modern Calvinists, that they pretend to 'the *sensible* operation 'of the Spirit.' As this is imputed to us a deviation from orthodoxy, we have a right to ask his Lordship, what he means by the word 'sensible' in this connexion? Surely he is too candid and just to impute to us the gross absurdity of holding as a religious tenet, that the operations of the Holy Spirit are subjected, or made visible, audible, or tangible, to our corporeal senses. But if he mean only, that we hold the *effects* of divine operations to be 'sensible,' in the acceptation of "apprehensible;" or that we may be "conscious" of effects which can be rationally ascribed to no other cause; we

must stand convicted: Who, indeed, that is conscious of loving God supremely, or of loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, can rationally ascribe such effects to any other source than divine operation? "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." "By this we *know* that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; what, *know* ye not your own selves?" If Christians may not be 'sensible' or conscious of gracious effects in their own minds, what rational interpretation can be given of these passages of holy writ, and many others of the same import and tendency? In this acceptation of the phrase; 'the sensible operation of the 'Spirit,' which is the only one we acknowledge, does not 'the real orthodox divine' concur with us?

§ 9. 'The real orthodox divine,' we are again informed, 'disclaims what in the lan-'guage of modern Calvinists, are called *expe-'riences*.' This expression is certainly to be found in the Calvinistic nomenclature. But what is meant by it? Is it, some enthusiastic '*suggestions* or *perceptions* known and felt to 'be communicated by the *immediate inspiration* 'of God?' Nothing less. This is only his Lordship's arbitrary interpretation of the term.

When we speak of an '*experienced*' Christian, we designate one who has learned spiritual wisdom by trials, and especially by mental exercises. When we speak of 'experiences,' related or written, we mean those exercises of mind which are of a religious nature; in other words, how our minds have been affected with the consideration of certain truths revealed in the scripture, or by the contemplation of God, of his providence, and of our own state before him. That some persons, both Arminians and Calvinists, have not been entirely free from enthusiasm, in giving an account of their mental exercises, is not to be concealed. But who can say, with truth, that these occasional mistakes are *countenanced* by the party here accused? We expect, very generally, of persons who wish to enter into communion with us, some account of their religious sentiments, what effect these have had on their views and tempers, how they obtained relief when made sensible of their sinful nature and practice, by what means they were induced to repent and believe in Christ, &c. But do we ever expect to receive from them an account of 'suggestions and perceptions known 'and felt to be communicated by immediate in-'spiration' in an *enthusiastic* sense? No. If at any time, which very seldom happens, we discover a propensity that way, we rather check it as wrong, than encourage it as excellent. But if a person mention either the time, the place,

or the occasion of his undergoing any remarkable change, either of his views, his resolutions, his affections or conduct, we call it his 'experience;' if it be scriptural and rational, we approve it, if otherwise we disapprove it. We are not quite so destitute of discretion, as to imagine, that "all is gold that glisters:" and we can assure his Lordship, that many unlettered rustics in our societies have delivered such '*experiences*' as the heart of a good man might rejoice to hear; manifesting in these simple records such acquaintance with their bibles, such improvement in religious knowledge, such traits of Christian sincerity, of repentance and lively faith, such genuine humility, meekness and charity, as powerfully to fix the conviction, that there is a *reality in religion*, and that the kingdom of God consisteth not in *word* but in *power*. It is incumbent on me moreover to add, that we make it a rule, rather it is a rule made for us by scripture and reason, to institute suitable enquiries respecting their discharge of personal and relative *duties*, their moral character, and consistent deportment. And if admitted into our communion, we watch over them to see that they "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." If they do not "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called," we warn, admonish or reprove them; if they backslide, we endeavour to "restore them in the spirit of meekness;" and

if any are not reclaimed by scriptural and prudential means, we exclude them from our communion.

§ 10. I appeal to the impartial reader whether our proceedings, as now related, be not founded on scripture, on right reason, and on just principles of a voluntary society, such as every Christian congregation ought to be? As true religion does not consist merely in a set form of words, or even just notions of truth, but also in a great measure in an 'experience,' or a consciousness of the influence of truth on the heart, temper, and conduct; "a congregation of Christian people," associating voluntarily for the worship of Almighty God, to promote his glory and the good of immortal souls, according to the directions of his word, have a right to expect an appropriate evidence of a similar design in every member of their communion. If any one appear to be essentially defective, on a charitable construction, we reject his proposal, as proceeding from one who is more likely to injure than to promote the spiritual design of a Christian church. But we do not sit as judges on his state towards God, as if we thought there was no salvation to be obtained without the pale of our communion. We do believe, however, that there is a *kind* of 'inspiration' to be enjoyed by Christians,—and does not 'the real

'orthodox divine' believe the same, when he prays to God that he would "cleanse the thoughts and desires of his heart, by the *inspiration* of his holy Spirit?" If there be no such thing to be experienced, it must be a very unmeaning and presumptuous service. If he claims the use of it in a good sense, why may not the same sense be intended by a Calvinist? We hope and pray for a divine influence on our hearts, to enable us to love God, and to keep his commandments; in other words, that he will "have mercy on us, and *incline our hearts* to keep his laws." Surely, this inclining of the heart implies some kind of inspiration or influence from the Spirit of God;—except men can satisfy themselves with words without a meaning.

§ 11. As to '*suggestions* and *perceptions* 'known and felt to be communicated by the 'immediate inspiration of God,' which are expressions imposed upon us, rather than approved by ourselves, we consider them as capable of a bad and a good sense. If by 'suggestions' be meant mysterious whispers, or certain unaccountable intimations presented to the mind, unconnected with any truth revealed in the scriptures, we consider them as mere delusions: but we believe that the influences of the Spirit may animate, and exhilarate the soul, in its

contemplations and other religious exercises, so that the effects may be "known and felt." "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and though the manner of the operation be not known, the effects may be both known and sensibly experienced. The same may be observed of 'perceptions.' We may not, and ought not to expect to know the agent or the agency, yet the fruits and consequences may be of a nature entirely unequivocal.

§ 12. The Bishop brings many other charges against us, which are founded entirely on a misinterpretation of our meaning. A few more specimens may be here mentioned. 'It cannot 'therefore be pretended that this article [on 'original sin] gives any countenance to the 'Calvinistic notions of *sinless obedience* and '*unspotted purity* in the elect, and of *incorri-* '*gible pollution* and *inevitable wickedness* in the 'reprobate.'* It would, perhaps, be uncharitable to suppose that his Lordship invented this crude notion for the purpose of exposing Calvinism to contempt, yet I am utterly at a loss to conjecture where he found it. We acknowledge no 'sinless 'obedience,' except the Redeemer's, in this world: but all who are true believers are "complete in him," that is, completely "accepted in the

* Refut. p. 51.

beloved." Instead of professing 'unspotted purity,' we lament our momentary imperfection. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Whatever some of the ancient Calvinists have advanced about 'incorrigible pollution' and 'inevitable wickedness in the reprobate,' I hope none of the moderns approve either of the language or the sentiment.

§ 13. His Lordship records the following as an error of the Calvinists, viz. 'that man 'has no concern whatever in working out his 'salvation:'* but as he produces no evidence, a direct and explicit denial of the charge is sufficient. I may, however, observe, that some preachers, and perhaps writers, have used the phrase 'a finished salvation' in reference to Christ's obedience unto death, and in allusion to his own words "It is finished." And why should the Calvinist alone be denied the common privilege of a candid interpretation? In such connexion, the word 'salvation' must intend the *basis* of salvation, as the word *redemption* is used for the price or the fundamental consideration of redemption.

* Refut. p. 48.

§ 14. An unguarded reader of the Refutation might be induced to apply the following language to Calvinists indiscriminately. 'The equally erro-' neous and baneful doctrine of *moral incapacity*, ' in the extent unhappily adopted by CALVIN, ' tends to produce hopeless melancholy, or hard-' ened profligacy.'* By 'moral incapacity' we are naturally led to understand a disinclination, a dislike, or a want of good will to what is right or excellent, in a moral sense. Now it would be difficult to find in the writings of CALVIN a greater moral incapacity than is expressed in the formularies of the Church of England, especially in the Article "On original sin." However, neither CALVIN nor any other person, ever expressed it in stronger terms than St. Paul, when he said, that "the carnal mind is *enmity against God;* for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be. So then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God." † —"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."‡ Is it possible for language to express a greater degree of "moral incapacity?" Indeed I allow and lament it, that CALVIN and some others after him, have illegitimately *inferred* an "incapacity" beside what is "moral;" I mean, an incapacity

* Refut. p. 78. † Rom. viii. 7, 8. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

implied in a supposed decree of reprobation. Nothing, I am persuaded, has more impeded the progress of theological and moral truth, or set the sentiments of real Christians more at variance, than an attempt to establish this unfounded dogma. And to speak my mind impartially, I freely concede to his Lordship that its tendency is 'to produce hopeless melancholy or hardened 'profligacy.' But then, his Lordship ought to have known, that very few modern Calvinists ever advance it, and with the great body of them it is a sentiment utterly exploded. After all, too, it is a totally different thing from a 'moral incapacity.'

§ 15. I am at a loss how to make any conciliatory concessions on such charges as the following. 'If he be told that he has only to 'cherish *faith* in his mind, and he will be eternally 'happy, he will be apt to persuade himself that 'he has this *faith*, while he is guilty of every 'vice within his means to which he feels any 'temptation. He will remember that the 'preacher only told him to have *faith*, and that 'he did not enjoin him to abstain from lying, 'drunkenness, theft, and fornication—and who-'ever has lived in the neighbourhood of certain 'preachers, *will testify* that it [this mode of 'reasoning] has taken place.'* I would fain

* Refut. p. 165.

discover a scintilla of candour in this statement, but am unable. If there *be* any such preachers in our country, why class them with Calvinists; why not give them their proper denomination, Solifidians or Antinomians? The Calvinists, indeed, after the sacred scriptures, consider genuine, operative faith,—the faith that worketh by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, and by which, it is recorded, "the just shall live,"—of unspeakable moment. For by a *believing* consideration of revealed truths—both promises and precepts — doctrines and duties — every Christian grace is improved, and every obligation to obedience appears more important: a *believing* view of God and his glorious perfections, of Jesus Christ in his person, offices, and mediatorial work, of the Holy Spirit and his promised aids, in short, of the divine law and the blessed gospel, must be rationally supposed to have a decisive influence on a man's mind and conduct. But we utterly disown and condemn the practice—if there be any such—of telling an audience that they have '*only* to cherish *faith*' in order to be eternally happy.

§ 16. There are indeed individuals in most audiences, who are "servants of corruption," and such will be ever disposed to "pervert the scriptures," to "hold the truth in unrighteous-

ness," to "turn the grace of God (i. e. gracious truths) into lasciviousness," (i. e. lascivious practices.) Such characters there were in the apostolic churches, and in every age. But I will venture to affirm, without fear of being fairly contradicted, that the presumptuous doctrine of human ability, or the power of free-will, in connexion with the mode of preaching recommended and adopted in opposition to the importance of faith, is far less efficacious in forming the conscientious and consistent Christian. Viewing the evil consequences of each extreme, if one has "slain its thousands," the other has "slain its ten thousands." Facts are stubborn things, and they are the best evidence that the case affords. To these we appeal; and let any true and impartial witness who lives 'in the 'neighbourhood of certain preachers' decide, under what ministry 'lying, drunkenness, theft, 'and fornication' prevail most. If one presumes, through criminal ignorance or perverseness, that "faith only" will save him; the other presumes, through ignorance no less criminal, that some fancied good works will counterbalance all his vices. We are told that 'even a doubt of the 'efficacy of *virtue* will lead to a disregard to its 'laws.'* But the counterpart is at least equally true, that even a doubt of the efficacy of *faith*

* Refut. p. 172.

will lead to a disregard of *its* laws. "What God hath joined, let no man put asunder."

§ 17. 'Calvinistic ministers,' we are informed, 'with all their zeal to support the doctrine of '*salvation through faith alone,* and all their 'anxiety to depreciate the importance of moral 'virtue, cannot avoid the *inconsistency* of allow-'ing that "good works will in any sense be 'rewarded." '* Salvation, we all know, is a relative term, implying some evil or danger from which a person is saved. Now, is there any other way, his Lordship being judge, of being saved from condemnation, but "through faith alone?" If this be not a doctrine taught by the formularies of the Church of England, it is difficult to know what they teach. Again, 'depreciation' denotes a comparative idea. The same thing may be highly valued on one account, and yet ought to be depreciated on another. Gold may be highly valued as a medium of commerce, and in many other respects; but gold formed into an idol, and set in competition with the true God, ought to be 'depreciated.' That glorious luminary the sun, is highly and justly valued, as the source of light and the attracting centre of our system; but when a Persian, exalts it into competition

* Refut. p. 182.

with its maker, and claims for it religious adoration, it ought to be 'depreciated.' Thus, also, good works and moral virtue, though truly valuable in their proper place, yet when they are produced in order to *save* us from condemnation, or procure our justification before God, ought to be 'depreciated.' But there are other things from which we have need to be saved beside condemnation for a breach of law and covenant. For instance, we have need to be saved from a charge of being destitute of moral virtue, and good works, which are due to God from all his rational creatures; and I know of no salvation or deliverance from this charge but by being actually virtuous, and by actual good works. Now what 'inconsistency' is there between depreciating moral virtue and good works in one case, and highly esteeming them in another. Is the Sun of no value because he is not a proper object of religious confidence?

SECT. III.

Some things imputed to Calvinists which are PECULIAR TO OTHER SECTS.

§ 1. To profess a state of *sinless* obedience and unspotted purity in this life, is peculiar in one sense, to Antinomians. § 2. In another, to Arminian Methodists. § 3—5. The Calvinistic view of *Christian perfection*, explained.

§ 6. To vindicate dreadful crimes, abominations, and reproaches, peculiar to the refuse of civil society. § 7. The representations of IRENÆUS, EPIPHANIUS, &c. probably overcharged. § 8. This probability increased by modern Facts. § 9. To profess private revelations, peculiar to Enthusiasts.

§ 10. That a continual progress in obedience is not necessary on our part to secure salvation, peculiar to practical Antinomians.

That Calvinists endanger the established church, and § 11. That their doctrine is liable to abuse, examined. § 12, 13. That the *greatest danger* of the established church, is *peculiar to itself.*

§ 1. UNDER this head of our Examination I shall consult brevity; yet as it is my design in this work not merely to shew that the Bishop's numerous charges against the modern Calvinists are unfounded, but also to explain our views of Christian doctrines, I shall dwell a little longer on some articles than otherwise would be necessary. For instance, his Lordship calls the notions of 'sinless obedience and unspotted 'purity' *Calvinistic.* Here, in order to an answer sufficiently fair, I might content myself with denying the imputation, except he had brought proofs of it. He might suppose that the notion is of public notoriety; and I might assert with

confidence that the contrary is a fact of public notoriety. If any persons, preachers or authors, express themselves in similar terms, they belong to other denominations. *Antinomians* have said some crude things about the elect being sinless, as considered in Christ who is so, that Christ was made a sinner for us and that we are pure or without spot in him, &c. For my own part, I can give them credit, that their real design is far less exceptionable than their expressions, interpreted with rigour, would import. If it be urged that these may be termed Calvinists, because they hold many points in common with Calvin; his Lordship himself may be so termed. For what denomination of Christians is there that does not hold many points in common with Calvin?

§ 2. The *Arminians* also in connexion with Mr. JOHN WESLEY, at least many of them, have said much about 'Christian perfection' and 'sinless perfection.' And some of them have contended that the latter is attainable in this life; nay, that some characters have actually attained this exalted distinction. Independently of the notion being justifiable or unjustifiable, I appeal to any one who has an accurate and extensive acquaintance with the Calvinists, is there *one* to be found among them who makes this profession? I know not any. Is it fair, is

it accurate, to impute to one denomination that which is *peculiar* to another? But, as before hinted, I wish to *explain*, as well as to *defend* the sentiments of modern Calvinists; and I shall therefore attempt to put my readers in possession of their sentiments on the subject.

§ 3. Absolute perfection belongs to God only. Compared with him, every creature is imperfect. "The heavens are not clean in his sight, and he chargeth his angels with *folly*," that is, comparatively speaking. And yet the apostle Paul speaks of Christians as *perfect:* St. John supposes "perfect love" may be in the disciples of Christ, "casting out fear:" Noah and Job are said to be "perfect;" and it is the declaration of Bildad that "God will not cast away a perfect man." Were we, therefore, to renounce every idea of perfection, as applied to Christians, who live under the most perfect dispensation of religion, we should be chargeable with a most notorious contradiction of God's word. What we maintain is this: First, that *every* true Christian has the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him. In this perfection he is so interested, as to be perfect or complete in the point of acceptance with God, since without such perfection and personal interest in it, we think it not conceivable how an imperfect creature could be accepted or

justified. Secondly, that every true Christian has a perfection of sincerity and aim: for the very idea of sincerity, or a "single eye," excludes all imperfection of principle; imperfect sincerity being a contradiction in terms—no less so, than impure purity, or a feigned unfeignedness. Thirdly, that some Christians have a perfection of exercised graces, compared with others of lower attainments.

§ 4. Their knowledge of revealed truths, for example, is more clear and comprehensive: they have a more accurate acquaintance with the perfections and character of God, and with their own real state compared with him and his law: their love to God and to the Saviour, is more steady, constant, and operative; they have that perfect love that casteth out fear: their faith is strong, giving glory to God, and rises to full assurance of the reality and importance of the things believed: their hope is more firm and steadfast, under the various trials of life: they delight themselves in the Lord more constantly: their confidence in God is less wavering: their affections are more set on things that are spiritual and heavenly: they are more zealously affected in a good cause: they more uninterruptedly cleave unto the Lord with full purpose; and follow him more fully. The kingdom of God is more powerfully set up in

their souls, consisting of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Compared with others, they may be said to rejoice evermore, and to pray without ceasing. They are of a meek and quiet spirit, and are clothed with humility: they put on the whole armour of God, and stand in the evil day of temptation: they grow up more and more into the likeness of Christ, and inwardly but humbly triumph in expectation of the glory that is promised them. And, to crown all, they sink into their proper insignificancy and nothingness, that the Lord alone may be exalted, reckoning themselves unprofitable servants.

§ 5. Though every true Christian therefore is equally perfect as interested in the perfection of Christ, and equally perfect as to the reality and sincerity of grace, considered as a principle in the soul; yet, there is a great difference as to exercised graces. There are, in this respect, babes, young men, and fathers in Christ. Their actual attainments admit of a great difference, which may be compared to the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. But those who are most perfect, in this comparative sense, do not pretend to 'sinless obedience and unspotted 'purity.' Their best prayers and praises are defective; often "when they would do good, the evil is present with them, and how to perform

that which is good they find not." They sincerely intend the glory of God that they may enjoy him for ever: but the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary. And the more they know of themselves, the more ready they are to confess, "I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad." "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" "I have not already attained, nor am I already perfect," compared with a state of *sinless* perfection. There is still room for greater exertions, in keeping the body under, and bringing it into subjection, in taking up the cross, and following Christ. While in this tabernacle of the body, they groan, being burdened, wishing to be cloathed with their house which is from heaven. Yet they rejoice in hope of the glory of God, yea in tribulations also, because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them. This is the 'Christian perfection' maintained by Calvinists.

§ 6. Through the convenient medium of ancient heretics we are represented as 'guilty 'of dreadful crimes' and 'doing many abomi-'nable and ungodly things,' and 'inveighing 'against those who, from the fear of God, are 'cautious not to sin even in thought or word,

'as idiots and fools.*' I will not say, that Calvinists have never transgressed the bounds of perfect charity, that "hopeth all things, and endureth all things," when opposing error, or condemning sin. They are men of like passions with others, and therefore when slandered and traduced they must needs feel it: must feel it sometimes with resentment as well as pity, and occasionally an indignant word may escape them. It is not true, however, that they sanction or countenance any conduct or expressions that appear inconsistent with charity any more than with truth. It is one of their principles to "overcome evil with good," and "by well doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," as directed by apostolic authority. But really one might be led to suppose, that the quotation from IRENÆUS regarding the Valentinians, represented by his Lordship as 'resembling the tenets of Calvinism,' was *peculiar* to none but the refuse of society, — to the inmates of Newgate or the colonists of Australasia. It would be a curious and not an unprofitable investigation, to ascertain, what proportion of Calvinists and Anticalvinists are executed, or sent to the hulks, as "guilty of a great variety of dreadful crimes."

§ 7. Low as we think human nature is sunk

* Refut. p. 514.

by the original apostacy, we may suspect that its degraded state is too strongly marked by IRENÆUS, EPIPHANIUS, and others who have written against Heretics. There is too much reason to suspect that these writers were not so intent upon a fair estimate of truth and error in their opponents, as they were solicitous to suppress and degrade them altogether,—and that the easiest way of doing this was by drawing a strong caricature of their opinions, and exhibiting them in the most forbidding light. I am far from thinking that these fathers had no just ground of complaint; but they did not act fairly, they kept no bounds, their pictures were too highly and extravagantly charged, and scarcely compatible with the real state of man's nature. We too well know to what excesses zeal without knowledge, or without charity, is in danger of being betrayed.

§ 8. Now, if in this advanced period of the Christian church, the Bishop of Lincoln, surrounded with adequate means of information, himself a man of acknowledged learning, talents, and respectability, is capable of drawing such a caricature of modern Calvinists, as we find contained in his "Refutation," the just inference is, that little dependance is to be placed on the bare assertions of interested parties in whatever period they may chance to wrangle. 'And

'doing many other abominable and ungodly 'things, they [i. e. the Valentinians resembling 'the Calvinists] inveigh against us—as idiots 'and fools.' Surely this portrait, on a cool review, cannot be sanctioned by his Lordship as an exact portraiture! Why these are notions and this is conduct 'peculiar' rather to infidel revilers, to the disciples of PAINE or the licentious admirers of VOLTAIRE! O when will the ministers of Christ learn to "speak the truth in love," and shew themselves worthy of their holy and divine Leader!

§ 9. There are many other things in the "Refutation" ascribed to Calvinists, which are peculiar to other sects; such as a 'claim to 'private revelation,'—which is peculiar to *enthusiasts*, whose distempered phantasies, like Jonah's gourd spring up in one night and perish in another, as their falsehood becomes manifest, to the confusion of their prophetic authors. If any reputed Calvinists fall into such deliriums, we disown them, as having deserted sound principles. Again, to represent 'instantaneous con-'version' as one of the "favourite tenets of modern Calvinists," is to confound their sentiments with those of another denomination of Christians. If this be a *peculiarity* of any class of Christians, it is to be found among those who agree with his Lordship in the chief points of

theological controversy; and especially on the cardinal point of the sovereign power of free will to produce instantaneous conversion in connexion with the promised influences of the spirit; and who in this respect consequently stand opposed to modern Calvinism, which attributes more to the sovereign power of Grace. I must remark, however, that many of these Christian brethren, controversy apart, unite with us occasionally in acts of religious worship, and in the exercise of kind affections. For men of this stamp, "who, from the fear of God, are cautious not to sin even in thought or word," we have an unfeigned respect: and God forbid, that we should on any occasion regard them 'as idiots and fools.' While we disapprove of their creed in some respects, we can embrace them as fellow Christians in the arms of affection. We consider ourselves bound to respect and love those who "fear God, eschew evil, and work righteousness," among all denominations. "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."

§ 10. As to the notion imputed to us, that 'a continual progress in obedience'—is 'not 'necessary on our part to secure salvation,' if it be peculiar to any sect, it is to be found among practical *Antinomians* with whom we have no

fellowship,—nor do they desire ours. But the most weighty charge, in the estimation of many who read the Bishop's Refutation, yet remains, *viz.* 'that the *established church* is in no small '*danger*, from the active hostility of those who 'profess *Calvinistic doctrines*.'* Now for my own part I am at a loss to conceive how these 'doctrines' wear an unfavourable aspect on the 'established church,' or in what manner those who 'profess' them are so peculiarly implicated in the alledged hostility. As Calvinists, of whatever description, we are in the habit of expressing our decided *approbation* of the *doctrinal* Articles of the Church of England, which we also consider as closely interwoven with its Liturgy. As Calvinistic dissenters, our chief objection lies against the plan of *discipline*, though many *other* dissenters (and I may add, a great number of persons who profess adherence to the established church,) are hostile to its doctrines. We strongly object indeed to the *general principle* of requiring subscription to articles of faith drawn up by any set of uninspired men, however excellent those Articles may be; persuaded that such requisitions have operated to the injury of real Christianity in every age, and that the arbitrary imposition of synodical decrees, canonical rites, and creeds,

* Refut. p. 284.

whether orthodox or heterodox, have kindled flames in the Christian church, from the second century to the present, which all the wisdom, meekness and patience of the best of men, have not been able to extinguish.

§ 11. Controversial equity requires, that I should notice, in this connexion, a conciliatory concession made by the Bishop in favour of 'many Calvinists.' It is the following: 'I am 'most ready to allow that many Calvinists have 'been pious and excellent men; and I am fully 'satisfied that there are in these days zealous 'Christians of that persuasion, who would be 'among the first to deplore any evil which might 'befal our constitution in church or state.'* This is the voice of candour; but it is overpowered by a very grievous exception. 'I 'contend that Calvinism is a system peculiarly 'liable to *abuse*. The *perversion* of its tenets 'has in former times been made, by wicked 'and designing men, the instrument of great 'mischief.' It is but fair to ask, what good thing is there (*virtue* indeed excepted, as an ancient philosopher well observes,) which is not 'liable to abuse?' Are not the divine laws themselves, and "the blessed gospel of the grace of God," thus 'liable?' Nay, are not

* Refut. p. 284.

those tenets which are the very best, the most exposed to 'perversion, by wicked and designing men?' It is needless in this place to enter into the history of Calvinism, in order to establish its exculpation in comparison with the sentiments of its opposers; but I will venture to say, that the Canons of Councils, provincial and ecumenical, and Acts of Uniformity in religion, have been a thousand times more mischievous to 'the interests of real Christianity,' than Calvinism. I cannot indeed return the compliment, that these have been 'abused' and 'perverted,' because it would be an implied acknowledgement, that in themselves they were good things; but I am constrained, by the fullest evidence, to regard them as an actual *abuse* of power.

§ 12. Before I dismiss the idea of the established church being in 'danger' from Calvinism, may I be allowed to submit my individual opinion with regard to a 'danger,' a substantial, not an imaginary danger, which seems to menace it from another quarter, and appears to me far more formidable. I allude to the modish practice of some of its own clergy to inveigh against Calvinism, as a frightful enemy. If I am not mistaken, the natural tendency of this is to excite the attention of the people to enquire *what it is*, which is "every where spoken against." They examine the Liturgy, the Articles, and perhaps

the Homilies; and the consequence is, that they see or suppose they see, that they are all Calvinistic. The most enquiring among them become dissatisfied with their ministers, when they strongly suspect that the desk and the pulpit are at variance. They then discover, at least, they think they discover, that the modern doctrine which they hear preached in the church, is very different from that which was taught by the reformers, and by those excellent men who drew up her formularies. By degrees, they wish to learn what the 'Calvinists' have to alledge in their own behalf,—they are astonished to perceive the prevailing similarity between their scheme of doctrine and that which they find in the Liturgy and the Thirty-nine Articles—and infer that their own teachers have apostatized from the faith of their pious ancestors.

§ 13. In order to cure this growing process, it would be at least prudent, instead of waging a war of extermination against the Calvinists, to preach the established doctrines more plainly and faithfully, appealing to the judgment and the consciences of the people, as well as to the scriptures. This method, when accompanied with holy tempers, upright conduct, and watchful prudence, would do more towards preserving the church from danger, than ten thousand weekly moral essays intermixed with bitter

invectives against Calvinistic and Methodistic 'fanaticism.' In the one case, they might reasonably hope to attach the people to their own church upon principle; in the other they are labouring to the utmost of their ability to drive them away. The one method addresses itself to the understanding, to the cool judgment, to the best feelings of an audience; the other to the prejudices, the bigotry, and the angry passions of unprincipled or ignorant men.—I do not presume to dictate in this matter, but have simply taken occasion to state my opinion frankly and impartially.

Chap. V.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS, PRODUCED BY THE BISHOP, EXAMINED.

Sect. I.

Quotations from the Fathers which have NO BEARING *on the points in question.*

§ 1. The subject stated. How we ought to *estimate* the sentiments of the Fathers. § 2. Quotations which relate to what *belongs* to men and to God, from Cyril. § 3. Concerning what is not *excusable*, from Hilary. § 4. The *consequence* of not believing, from Ambrose. § 5. Concerning divine *assistance*, from Jerome and Augustine. § 6. The act of sin *voluntary*, from Augustine. § 7. Christians the subjects of *two births*, from Augustine. § 8. The danger of falling into opposite *extremes*, from Augustine. § 9—12. *Errors* condemned, from Augustine and Chrysostom. § 13. Certainty of divine *promises* to those who are willing, from Chrysostom. § 14. Concerning divine *permission*, from Chrysostom. § 15. Concluding remarks.

§ 1. Were I to say, that more than one half of the pile of quotations from the Fathers, consisting of about two hundred and forty pages, produced by the Bishop of Lincoln against Calvinism, has no bearing on the point in question, I should be far from transgressing the boundary of truth. Of the other moiety a considerable part militates against the Bishop's avowed principles; a part consists of quotations which are doubtful, only in expressions against the Calvinists, but

not in meaning; and the remainder appears to be unscriptural both in language and in sentiment. Before we proceed to particulars, it may be proper to premise, that these uninspired Fathers lived in the infancy of the Christian church—that they have no just claim to superiority over the moderns, who, in many respects, are their superiors, as they are their seniors in point of advantages—that the controversies agitated in their days were very different from those under consideration—that we possess the same scriptures that they possessed—that the rules of just criticism are now better understood, than in their days—that a more accurate logic may be naturally expected in the present age, than that to which they were accustomed—and that, notwithstanding their zeal, piety, and eloquence, in many instances, they are very indifferent guides in controversial theology. The ultimate appeal must be to the genuine sense of the inspired volume.

§ 2. Some of the quotations relate to what belongs to men and to God. Thus CYRIL of Jerusalem says, '" It *belongs* to me to *speak*, to ' you to give *attention*, to God to *make perfect*."* Again, "' It *belongs* to God to give grace, but to ' you to receive and preserve it. Do not there-

* Refut. p. 347.

'fore despise the grace, because it is given 'freely, but having received it, preserve it with 'reverence."'* Whole pages to this effect are quoted; but what have they to do with the points in debate? Whole volumes of similar quotations might be extracted from the Fathers, but what tendency could they have to settle controversies about Calvinism?

§ 3. Other quotations refer to what is not excusable. Thus HILARY remarks, '"The *ex-* '*cuse* of a certain natural necessity in crimes is '*not admitted.* For [on that supposition] the 'serpent might have been innocent, who him-'self stops his ears that they may be deaf."'† Again, '"There is not any *necessity* of sin in 'the *nature* of men, but the practice of sin 'arises from the desire of the will, and the 'pleasure of vice."'‡ Here the author evidently refers to a fatal necessity, as maintained by the Valentinians, Basilidians, Marcionites, and other heretics of those times; but what relevancy is there in such quotations against modern Calvinists? We cordially concur with HILARY in condemning such dogmas.

§ 4. Some quotations are produced to shew the consequence of not believing. Thus AMBROSE:

* Refut. p. 349. † Ib. p. 359. ‡ Ib. p. 360.

'"If any one does not believe in Christ, he 'defrauds *himself* of the general benefit, just 'as if one should exclude the rays of the sun 'by shutting his windows."* Again, '"He saw 'that those who are diseased cannot be saved 'without a remedy, and therefore he afforded a 'medicine to the sick. Therefore he brought 'the assistance of health to all; so that whoso-'ever shall perish, may ascribe the cause of his 'death to himself, who was unwilling to be cured 'when he had a remedy, by which he might 'have escaped."'† Of what possible use is it to multiply quotations on this head, while there is no difference of opinion?

§ 5. Many quotations relate to divine assistance. Thus JEROME: '"We so preserve free-'will to man, that we do not deny the *assistance* '*of God* in each thing."'‡ And thus AUGUSTINE: '"If he (Pelagius) will agree that the will itself, 'and the action, are *assisted by God*, and so 'assisted that we cannot will or do any thing 'well without that assistance, no controversy 'will be left between us, as far as I can judge, 'concerning the assistance of the grace of God."'‖ And so say the Calvinists. As these lines contain the whole of the quotation, what could be his Lordship's design in producing it? On what

* Refut. p. 380. † Ib. p. 378. ‡ Ib. p. 410. ‖ Ib. p. 448.

information could he rest, if he supposed such passages as these are adverse to modern Calvinism?

§ 6. Other quotations are produced to prove that the act of sin is voluntary. To this effect we have a long quotation from AUGUSTINE: '"If 'that defect, which is called sin, like a fever, 'seized a person *contrary to his will*, the punish-'ment which follows the sinner, and which is 'called damnation, would appear to be unjust. 'But now, sin is so far a *voluntary evil*, that it 'is by no means *sin*, unless it be *voluntary:* and 'and this, indeed, is so clear, that not any of 'the learned, and no considerable number of 'the unlearned, dissent from it. Wherefore it 'must either be denied, that sin is committed; 'or it must be confessed, that sin is committed 'with the will.—Lastly, if we do not act wrongly 'with the will, no one is to be reproved at all, 'or admonished; and if you take away these 'things, the Christian law, and the whole disci-'pline of religion, must necessarily be destroyed. 'Therefore *sin is committed by the will.*"'* Again, '"A distinction is to be made between the law 'and grace. The law commands, grace assists. 'Neither would the law command, unless there 'were will; nor would grace assist, if the will

* Refut. p. 415.

'were sufficient.'"* I have inserted these passages because they give a good illustration of the Calvinistic sentiment upon the point in question; —what could be the learned Bishop's design in producing them, it is distressing to conjecture.

§ 7. We have a prolix quotation from AUGUSTINE to prove, that real Christians are the subjects of two births. '"There are *two births*, 'one is of the earth, the other of heaven; one 'is of the flesh, the other of the spirit; one is 'of mortality, the other of eternity; one is of 'male and female, the other of God and the 'church. But each of these two takes place 'only once; neither the one nor the other can 'be repeated. Nicodemus rightly understood 'the birth of the flesh. What did Nicodemus 'understand? Can a man enter a second time 'into his mother's womb, and be born? Whoever 'shall say to you, that you may be born a *second* '*time spiritually*, answer him what Nicodemus 'said, Can a man enter a second time into his 'mother's womb, and be born? I am already 'born of Adam; Adam cannot generate me a 'second time. I am already born of Christ; 'Christ cannot generate me a second time. 'As the natural birth cannot be repeated; '*so neither can baptism*."'† I have added

* Refut. p. 417. † Ib. p. 421.

this last clause, to complete the quotation, for the purpose of shewing in what manner the term "baptism" is used. The whole of the passage evidently shews, that the name of the sign is made to stand for the thing signified. Here the Calvinistic sentiment is clearly explained. The true Christian is born of heaven—born of the spirit—born of God: and this birth "*cannot be repeated.*" Baptism, literally considered, not only may, but often is repeated; as first privately, then publicly—one time by affusion, another time by immersion, &c.; but the spiritual baptism, the thing signified, "*cannot* be repeated."

§ 8. Another passage from AUGUSTINE deserves to be inserted here, not only as an instance of those quotations which have no bearing on the point in question, but as an edifying exemplification of Calvinistic sentiments on the danger of falling into opposite extremes. '"The mind of man wavering and 'fluctuating between the confession of infirmity 'and the boldness of presumption, is generally 'beaten about this way and that, and is so 'impelled, that he is in *danger of falling down a* '*precipice on either side.* For if he should en-'tirely give himself up to his own infirmity, 'and incline to this opinion, so as to say, Because 'the *mercy of God* is in the end so ready to all

'sinners, in whatever sins they may persevere, 'provided they believe that God delivers, that 'God pardons, that no one of the wicked who 'have faith (fidelium iniquorum) perishes; that 'is, no one of those perishes, who say to them-'selves, Whatever I may do, with whatever 'crimes and wickedness I may be defiled, how 'much soever I may sin, God delivers me by 'his *mercy*, because I have believed in him: 'He, therefore, who says that no person of this 'kind perishes, from a wrong opinion, inclines 'to the impunity of sinners; and that just God 'to whom mercy and judgment are sung [Ps. ci. '1.], not mercy only, but judgment also, finds 'the person wrongly presuming upon himself, 'and abusing the *mercy* to his own destruction, 'and must necessarily condemn him. Such a 'thought then throws a man down a precipice, 'through fear of which, if any one should raise 'himself to a certain boldness of presumption, 'and shall presume on his *own strength and* '*righteousness*, and shall propose in his own 'mind to fulfil righteousness, and so to do all 'things which are commanded in the law, that 'he offends in nothing, and to have his life in 'his own power, so that he no where fails, no 'where stumbles, is no where in darkness, and 'attributes this to *himself* and to the *power of* '*his will;* even if he should happen to fulfil all 'things which seem just in the sight of men,

'so that nothing is found in his life which can 'be blamed by men, God condemns this very 'presumption, and boast of pride. What then 'happens if a man should justify himself, 'and presume upon his *own righteousness?* He 'falls. If, considering and thinking of his own 'weakness, and *presuming on the mercy of God,* 'he shall neglect to purge his life of his sins, 'and shall plunge into every gulph of wicked-'ness; he too falls.—Again, I say this short 'thing, which you may all keep fixed upon your 'minds, Presume not on your *own righteousness* '*to reign;* presume not on the *mercy of God to* '*sin.*'* Can any cautions be more strictly consistent with Calvinism? Were it not that the language is not of modern construction, one might suppose it an exhortation from a modern Calvinist to his audience.

§ 9. Many quotations are introduced with a view, apparently, to condemn errors,—which errors, however, are equally condemned by modern Calvinists. A few of these must suffice. AUGUSINE: '"Abraham offered his son Isaac to 'God, to be sacrificed—a great work, but of 'faith. I praise the *edifice* of the *work,* but I 'see the *foundation* of *faith.* I praise the *fruit* 'of good works, but I acknowledge the *root*

* Refut. p. 425.

'in faith. But if Abraham did this without a 'right faith, that work, of whatever kind it 'might be, would not profit him. Again, if he 'had faith, so that when God should command 'him to offer his son to be sacrificed, he should 'say with himself, I do not do it, and yet *I believe* '*that God delivers me, even though I despise his* '*commands;* faith without works would be dead, 'and would remain, as it were, a barren and 'dry root, without fruit."'* What Calvinist does not heartily concur in this condemnation?

§ 10. CHRYSOSTOM: '"Not every one that 'saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the 'kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the 'will of my Father which is in heaven." In 'this passage Christ seems to me to *reprove the* '*Jews, who placed every thing in their dogmas,* '*without any regard to their lives.* Therefore 'St. Paul accuses them, saying, "Behold thou 'art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and 'makest thy boast of God, and knowest his 'will;" but there shall be no advantage to you 'from thence, unless there be a correspondence 'in your life and works. But he did not stop 'here, but said, much more; "For many will 'say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not 'prophesied in thy name?" For he says, not

* Refut. p. 429.

'only he who has faith, but leads a careless life, is 'excluded from heaven, but although with his 'faith a person shall have performed many 'miracles, and have done nothing good, he also 'is equally excluded from those sacred gates."'* Excellent remarks. Again, the same Father, CHRYSOSTOM, answers erroneous cavillers, (whom the Bishop of Lincoln it appears, deems like the Calvinists,) in the following manner: '"They 'bring other objections, asking, And why did 'God make him such? God did not make him 'such; far from it; for then he would not have 'punished him. For if we do not blame our 'servants for those things of which we are our-'selves the cause, much less would the God of 'the universe. But the objector says, Whence 'came he such? From himself, and from his 'own negligence. What, from himself? Ask 'thyself: for if the bad be not bad from them-'selves, do not punish your servant, or reprove 'your wife for her offences, or beat your son, 'or accuse your friend, or hate your enemy who 'injures you. For all these deserve pity, not 'punishment, if they do not offend from them-'selves."† There is much more to the same purpose in this quotation, — and all truly Calvinistic.

§ 11. Of the same evangelical and Calvinistic

* Refut. p. 481. † Ib. p. 482.

tendency is the following quotation from AUGUSTINE, against the error of those who separated faith and works. ' " When the apostle says, ' that he concludes that man is justified by faith ' without the works of the law, he does not ' mean that the works of righteousness may be ' disregarded, after faith is perceived and pro- ' fessed; but that every one may know that he ' may be justified by faith, although the works ' of the law shall not have preceded. For they ' follow the person justified, and do not precede ' him who is to be justified.—Because, therefore, ' this opinion had then arisen, the other aposto- ' lical Epistles of Peter, John, James, and Jude, ' principally direct their zeal against it, to prove ' with great earnestness, that faith without ' works is of no avail; as even Paul himself ' has not defined it faith of *any sort*, by which ' men believe in God, but that wholesome and ' plainly evangelical faith whose works proceed ' from love: and faith, he says, which worketh ' by love." '* In this manner AUGUSTINE reproved the false teachers of his day;—a manner precisely similar to that which is adopted, when occasion demands it, by the modern Calvinists.

§ 12. CHRYSOSTOM refutes the error of

* Refut. p. 439.

those who hold that men are good by force, in opposition to choice. '"Since he has made us 'masters of the choice of bad and good actions, 'and wishes us to be voluntarily good; therefore 'if we be not willing, he does not *force*, he does 'not *compel;* for to be good *by force* is not to 'be good at all."'* Nothing can be more decidedly Calvinistic. Through what medium then, it is natural to ask, could his Lordship look at the doctrine of modern Calvinism, when he imagined that this quotation had any bearing against them? With equal astonishment they will find their learned Refuter adducing from the same Father, the following passage containing a censure on some professing Christians who had imbibed the Heathen absurdities about fate. '"*God* says, If ye be *willing*, 'ye shall eat the good of the land; but *Fate* 'says, *although we be willing*, unless it shall be 'permitted us, this *will* is of no use. *God* says, 'If ye *will not obey* my words, a sword shall 'devour you; *Fate* says, *although we be not* '*willing*, if it shall be granted us, we are cer-'tainly saved. Does not Fate say this? What 'then can be clearer than this opposition? What 'can be more evident than this war, which the '*diabolical teachers of wickedness* have thus 'shamelessly declared against the divine oracles?

* Refut. p. 456.

'But, as I have said, that demons and men like 'demons (I mean the Greeks) should believe 'these things, is no wonder: but that you, who 'were thus enjoying the divine and saving 'instruction, should despise these things, and 'adopt those absurdities, which destroy the soul, 'this is of all things the most grievous."' * What reader can his Lordship expect to apply this language in opposition to modern Calvinists, except one here and there profoundly ignorant of their principles? Does even the Bishop really wish for his readers to regard them as "the diabolical teachers of wickedness," resembling those who are here opposed, by CHRYSOSTOM? Where is knowledge, where is candour, where is common equity? I believe we have not a member nor a catechumen in our societies, who would not cordially approve of CHRYSOSTOM's reasoning.

§ 13. An unsuspecting reader of the "Refutation" would be induced to regard the following quotation, also, from the writings of the same Father as adverse to our principles, from the mere circumstance that it is inserted there for that purpose; while at the same time it is perfectly consonant with our professed opinions. It relates to the certainty of divine promises to those who are willing. '"But some one may

* Refut. p. 458.

'say, that if acting rightly depends upon the 'assistance of God, and it is not in my power 'to act rightly, I ought not to be blamed: for 'when I shall have done every thing in my 'power, and shall have willed, and chosen, and 'entered upon the business, but he upon whom 'the success depended shall not have assisted 'me, or stretched out his hand, I am freed from 'all blame. But this is not the real case. For 'it is impossible *if we will, and choose, and* '*resolve, that God should desert us.* For if he 'encourages, and exhorts those who are unwil-'ling, to be willing, much more does he not 'desert those who choose of their own accord. '"For look, says he, at the generations of old, 'and see, did ever any trust in the Lord, and 'was confounded? or did any abide in his fear, 'and was forsaken?" And again, Paul says, '"Hope maketh not ashamed?" that is, hope in 'God: for it is impossible for any one to fail, 'who hopes in God with all his mind, and exerts 'himself to the uttermost.—And again, we are 'told, "He that endureth to the end shall be 'saved." These are all rules, and laws, and 'decrees; and this ought to be fixed in your 'mind, that it is impossible that any one who 'is diligent, and takes care for his own salva-'tion, and makes all the exertion in his power, 'should ever be deserted of God."'* Many

* Refut. p. 477.

pages to the same purpose might be here inserted from CHRYSOSTOM, (were I not desirous of avoiding needless prolixity,) as fully consentaneous to our views on this subject: and really when we find the Bishop swelling his pages with them *against* us, it is difficult to assign any probable motive which would not impeach either his integrity or his discrimination.

§ 14. There are some quotations, still from CHRYSOSTOM, produced against the Calvinists, relating to the divine permission, which, notwithstanding, we must take leave to regard as pious and conclusive. '"This is the peculiar 'language of scripture—'God gave them over 'to a reprobate mind,' and 'God hath divided 'unto all nations;' that is, he has *permitted*, 'allowed. For he does not here introduce him '*acting*, but he shews that these things happen 'by the wickedness of others. For when we 'are deserted by God, we are delivered up to 'the devil; but when given up to the devil, we 'suffer ten thousand evils. Therefore, that he 'may alarm the hearer, he says, he hardened, 'he *gave up*. For that he not only does not 'give us up, but does not desert us except from 'the want of our own will, learn from these 'expressions;—'Do not your sins separate me 'and you?' And again—'They that forsake 'thee shall perish.' Hosea says, 'Thou hast

'forgotten the law of thy God, and I will forget 'thee:' and he himself in the g spel says— 'How often would I have gathered thy children 'together, and ye would not!' And again 'Isaiah — 'I came, and there was no man; 'when I called, there was none to answer.' 'These things he says, to shew that we are '*ourselves the origin of our being deserted*, and '*the cause of our own destruction.*" '*

§ 15. Were it not that I consider the preceding quotations as orthodox, and calculated to instruct and edify the pious reader, an apology would be necessary for detaining him so long on subjects which have no bearing on the points in controversy. I have given the quotations in the Bishop's own translation of them, to preclude all suspicion of unfair design. There is no doubt his Lordship might have conveyed their meaning in language far more perspicuous and elegant, had he thought proper to deviate from so literal a rendering: but, where controversy is concerned, he was perfectly right in preferring faithfulness to elegance, if the union of both was really incompatible.

* Refut. p. 496. CHRYSOST. opera. vol. viii. p. 407.

SECT. II.

Quotations produced by the Bishop which militate against his own avowed principles.

§ 1. Quotations concerning the source of Christian Graces, from IGNATIUS and CLEMENT of Rome. § 2. On the divine source of our virtue, from ORIGEN and CYRIL of Jerusalem. § 3. The same, from GREGORY of Nazianzum. § 4. That nobody can begin any thing that is good without the Lord, from AMBROSE. § 5. That man can do no good work without God, from JEROME. § 6, 7. That God is the efficient cause of works and graces, from AUGUSTINE.

§ 8. On *Baptism*, from JUSTIN MARTYR. § 9. On *Regeneration*, from IRENÆUS.

§ 10, 11. On *Predestination* to Life, from CLEMENT of Alexandria. § 12. On the same, from JEROME. § 13. Remarks on a passage in JEROME about God *willing us to will.*

§ 14. On *Perseverance*, from AMBROSE; and § 15. From AUGUSTINE.

§ 16, 17. On *Co-operation*, from AUGUSTINE; and § 18. From CHRYSOSTOM. § 19. On human *weakness*, from CHRYSOSTOM.

§ 1. I SHALL begin with those quotations which relate to the *source of Christian graces*, including *faith*. The reader will recollect what are the Bishop's avowed sentiments concerning faith, as produced in a former part of this volume.* The following quotation is from IGNATIUS, a contemporary of the apostles: ‘ “ Of all which, nothing is hidden from you, ‘ if you have *faith* perfectly towards Jesus ‘ Christ, and *charity*, which are the beginning

* Chap. II. Sect. iii.

'and end of life. Faith is the beginning, charity 'the end. *These two* formed into one, *are of* '*God.** But all other things which relate to a 'holy life are *consequences* of these things.— 'The tree is made manifest by its fruit: so 'those who profess themselves Christians shall 'be discerned by their actions." '† Thus also CLEMENT of Rome, a contemporary of the apostles': '"For what was our father Abraham 'blessed? Was it not because through faith 'he wrought righteousness and truth? Isaac, 'knowing with confidence what was to come, 'cheerfully submitted to be a sacrifice. Jacob, 'with humility, departed out of his own 'country, flying from his brother, and went to 'Laban, and served him, and the sceptre of the 'twelve tribes of Israel was given to him.— 'They were therefore all *glorified and magnified*, '*not for their own sake*, or for their works, the 'righteousness which they had wrought, *but* '*through his will.*‡—What then shall we do, 'brethren? Shall we cease from good works, 'and lay aside charity? God forbid that this 'should take place in us; but let us hasten 'with cheerfulness and alacrity to perform 'every good work." '‖ Here, these apostolic

* τα δε δυο εν ενοτητι γενομενα θεου εςιν

† Refut. p. 287. COTELER. Vol. ii. p. 15.

‡ ου δι' αυτων—αλλα δια του θεληματος αυτου.

‖ Refut. p. 289.

Fathers expressly ascribe Christian graces, especially faith and charity, to *God* and *his will* as their *source* exclusively.

§ 2. On the divine source of our virtue ORIGEN observes: ' " The virtue of a rational ' creature is mixed, arising from his own free- ' will, and the Divine Power conspiring with ' him who chooses that which is good. But ' there is need of our own free-will, and of ' divine co-operation, *which does not depend upon* ' *our will*, not only to *become* good and virtuous, ' but also after we become so, that we may ' persevere in virtue; since even a person who ' is made perfect will fall away, if he be elated ' with his virtue, and ascribe the whole to him- ' self, not referring the due glory to Him who ' contributes *by far the greater share*, both in ' the acquisition of virtue, and in the persève- ' rance in it." '* That no virtue can be exercised without our free-will, is confessed on both sides; but here a kind of divine operation is asserted, " which does not depend upon our will." Thus also CYRIL of Jerusalem: ' " That ' the soul of every one of you may be found ' not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' ' I do not say *before you receive grace* (for how ' could that be, you who are called for the

* Refut. p. 339.

'remission of sins) but that *after grace is given,* 'your conscience, being found without condem-'nation, may *concur with grace.*" '* Here the *precedence* of the concurrence, as the immediate source of our holiness, is evidently ascribed to *divine grace.* Nor is there any thing in the connexion tending to shew, that CYRIL meant by the term "grace" objective favours exclusively.

§ 3. GREGORY of Nazianzum: '"When 'you hear, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor 'of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth 'mercy,' I advise you to suppose the same 'thing. For because there are some so proud 'of their virtue, as to attribute every thing to 'themselves, and nothing to Him who made them 'and gave them wisdom, and is the author of 'good, this expression teaches them that a 'right will stands in need of assistance from 'God; or rather, *the very desire of what is right* 'is something divine, and *the gift of the mercy* '*of God.* For we have need both of power 'over ourselves, and of salvation from God. 'Therefore, says he, It is not of him that 'willeth, that is, it is not of him *only* that 'willeth, nor of him *only* that runneth, but of 'God that sheweth mercy. Since *the will itself*

* Refut. p. 350.

'*is from God,* he *with reason attributes every* '*thing to God.*—I know, says he, that the race 'is not to the swift, nor the battle to the 'strong; nor is the victory to those who fight, 'nor the harbour to those who sail well: but '*it is of God* both to work the victory, and to 'preserve the vessel into port."'* In this passage, GREGORY expressly ascribes to *God,* as its proper *source,* "the very desire of what is right;" and as "the will itself is from God," so "every thing" that is good is attributed to him "with reason."

§ 4. AMBROSE, one of the most judicious and self-consistent of the Fathers, observes, '"God says to Moses, I will have mercy on 'whom I will have mercy, and I will have com-'passion on whom I will have compassion. So 'then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him 'that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.' 'Perhaps you may say, we ought then neither 'to will, nor to run: but God is wont to desert 'those who are negligent; therefore this is not 'his meaning. But let us consider what he 'does mean: *Perseverance* is not of the man 'who willeth, or of him who runneth; for it is '*not in the power of man:* but it is *of God,* who 'pitieth, that you may be able to complete

* Refut. p. 371.

'what you have begun.—You see, because the 'power of God every where co-operates with 'the endeavours of man, that nobody can build 'a house without the Lord, nobody can keep a 'city without the Lord, nobody can *begin any* '*thing without the Lord.*" '* Here AMBROSE not only denies to man the "power" of persevering, but also the power of *beginning* "any thing *(good)* without the Lord."

§ 5. JEROME also is very explicit on this point of gracious causality from God. '"Man 'from the beginning of his condition, has God 'as an assistant; and since it was of his grace 'that he was created, and it is of his mercy that 'he subsists and lives, *he can do no good work* '*without him*, who has so granted free-will, that 'he did not refuse his grace in any single 'work." '† Again, '"When, says he, you shall 'return to the Lord, he shall heal all your con-'tritions and backslidings, by which you had 'departed from the Lord. For though, through 'your own will you return to the Lord, yet '*unless he shall draw you*, and strengthen your 'desire by his support, *you will not be able to be* '*saved.*" '‡ Moreover; '"For by grace ye 'are saved, through faith: and that not of your-

* Refut. p. 380, 381. AMBR. opera. vol. i. p. 1098. 1309.

† Refut. p. 383. ‡ Ib. p. 388.

'selves: it is the gift of God. Therefore, he says, 'he was about to shew the exceeding riches of 'his grace in the ages to come, in his kindness, 'because ye are saved by grace through faith, 'not through works. And *this very faith is not of* '*yourselves*, but *of him who called you.* But this 'is said, lest, perhaps, this thought should 'secretly arise in you; If we be not saved 'through our works, certainly we are saved 'through faith, and in *another* way our salva-'tion is owing to *ourselves.* Therefore he added 'and said, *That faith itself is not of our will, but* '*of the gift of God.* Not that free-will is *taken* '*away* from man." '*

§ 6. As to AUGUSTINE, who was so much engaged in opposing the Pelagian heresy, it is no wonder that he should refer all our good works, and all our graces, to God as their efficient source, though there were other heresies, still subsisting in his day, against which it was necessary to be guarded. '"If, therefore, 'there be no *grace* of God, how does he *save* 'the world? And if there be not *free-will*, how 'does he *judge* the world? Wherefore, under-'stand my book or epistle according to this 'faith, that ye neither deny the grace of God, 'nor so defend free-will as to separate it from

* Refut. p. 406.

'the grace of God; *as if you could by any means 'think or do any thing according to God without 'it, which is altogether impossible.* For on this 'account, the Lord, when he spake concerning 'the fruits of righteousness, said to his disciples, 'Without me ye can do nothing." '* Again, '"How are they said to deny free-will, who 'confess that every man who believes in God 'with his heart, believes only with his own 'free-will; whereas they rather oppose free-'will, who oppose the *grace of God, by which 'it is in reality free to choose and do what is 'good?*" '† Moreover: '"He foreknew that 'their will would be bad; he *foreknew* it indeed, 'and because his prescience is infallible, the bad 'will is not on that account *his*, but *theirs.* 'Why then did he create them who he knew 'would be such? Because, as he foreknew 'what evil they would do, so also he foresaw '*what good he would himself produce* out of their 'bad actions. For he so formed them, that he 'left them the means of doing something; by 'which whatever they should choose, even 'blameably, they would find him acting lauda-'bly, concerning himself. For they have the 'bad will from themselves; but *from him a 'good nature* and a just punishment." '‡ As it would be directly opposite to the design of

* Refut. p. 418. † Ib. p. 419. ‡ Ib. p. 419.

AUGUSTINE to suppose him to intend by "a good nature," a nature which was *once* good, though now corrupted, or natural powers which are in themselves good; he must be concluded to mean, that "a good nature" existing in some, is from God as its immediate source, while the "bad will" in others is "from themselves."

§ 7. The following observations of AUGUSTINE are also truly excellent, in proof of the same point,—that God is the immediate source of our graces, from whence flow good works. '"Let not any one say, *Therefore God chose* '*works* in him whom he loved, although they 'did not yet exist, *because* he foreknew that 'they would be: but if he *chose works*, how 'does the apostle say, that the *election was not* '*made of works?* Wherefore it is to be under-'stood, that good works are done through love, 'but *that love is in us through the gift of the* '*Holy Ghost*, as the same apostle says, 'The 'love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, 'by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' 'Therefore no one ought to glory in his works 'as if they were his own, *which he has by the* '*gift of God*, since *love itself works good in* '*him*."'* As far as the testimony of this

* Refut. p. 424.

Christian Father goes, what can be more decisive of the point in question?—and be it remembered that I do not quote all the passages that might be produced, but merely a few specimens.

§ 8. There are some passages in the Fathers, contained even in the very quotations which the Bishop has himself selected, that militate against his own avowed notions of *baptism.* Thus, for example, JUSTIN MARTYR: ' " What ' advantage is there in *that baptism which makes* ' *clean flesh and body only?* Wash your souls ' from wrath, and from covetousness, from envy, ' from hatred, and behold the body is pure." '* And thus writes AUGUSTINE: ' " Water *exhi-* ' *biting externally* the sacrament of grace, and ' the Spirit *internally operating* the benefit of ' grace, loosing the bond of crime, and *restoring* ' *the goodness of nature,* regenerate the man in ' one Christ, born of one Adam." '† Here JUSTIN regards water baptism not as cleansing the soul, but terminating, as to its efficacy, on " flesh and body *only:*" and AUGUSTINE contemplates baptism as a sacrament " exhibiting " grace externally; while the internal change is the work of the Spirit. The man is regenerated externally by water baptism, but internally by

* Refut. p. 298. † Ib. p. 416

the Spirit's operation.—That these are '*inse-* '*parable*,' we have before shewn to be a popish conceit.

§ 9. The Bishop openly avows, that to regenerate means to baptize,—or that regeneration is never used either in the scriptures or the Fathers but in connexion with baptism. Of this let the reader judge from the following passage in IRENÆUS: '"The Lord is 'the first 'born from the dead,' and receiving into his 'bosom the ancient Fathers, *he regenerated them* '*into the life of God*, he himself being made the '*beginning* of those who live, as Adam was made 'the beginning of those who die. Wherefore 'Luke, also beginning the genealogy from our 'Lord, carried it back to Adam, signifying that '*they did not regenerate him but he them* into 'the gospel of life."'* The Lord Jesus is here said to "regenerate" the ancient Fathers "into the life of God;" but did he *baptize* them? IRENÆUS evidently uses the word "regenerate," as the Calvinists often do,—for that spiritual change, or the beginning of a life from God, which baptism only represents externally, without any necessary connexion between the sign and the thing signified.

§ 10. The Bishop of Lincoln strenuously

* Refut. p. 301.

opposes the Calvinistic sentiment, respecting *Predestination to Life.* Let us now examine whether some of his ecclesiastical auxiliaries are not guilty of treachery. CLEMENT of Alexandria writes thus: ' " We say that there is one ' ancient and Catholic church, collecting into ' the unity of one faith, according to its own ' testaments, or rather according to one testa- ' ment, delivered at sundry times, by the will of ' one God, through one Lord, *those who had ' been already ordained, whom God predestinated, ' who he knew,* before the foundation of the ' world, *would be just.*" '* If it be said, that CLEMENT means, God foreknew that some of themselves would be just, and on that account they "had been already ordained" or "predestinated;" I reply, that this would be sinking the Father far below mediocrity as to Christian knowledge, and involving him in absurdities which his expressions do not necessarily imply. He must have known, in common with every Christian, that no descendant of Adam can make himself just. He therefore must have intended, by the mode of expression, to guard against the pernicious heresy which discarded all discrimination of character, which founded every thing on the determination of Fate. Those whom *he* ordains, not *Fate,* to be living

* Refut. p. 317.

members of the true church, are foreknown to be "just," as well as to be saved: nor will any one surely hence infer that they made *themselves* just, as the *basis* of divine foreknowledge? If *God* makes any one just, it must be from design, such must have "been already ordained, and predestinated" to this end.

§ 11. In opposition to the same stupid heresy the same Father thus argues: '"Either the 'Lord does not care for all men, and this pro-'ceeds either from his not being *able* to do so, 'which it is wrong to suppose, as it would be 'a sign of weakness, or from his not being '*willing*, although able, which would not be 'compatible with his attribute of goodness, for 'he who for our sake took flesh subject to 'suffering, is not slothful;—or, he does care for 'all men, which is becoming him who is Lord 'of all; for he is the Saviour, not of some and 'not of others, since he *distributed his favour* 'according to the fitness of every one, both to 'Greeks and to Barbarians, and to *those of them* '*who were predestinated*, being *called in his own* '*time*, the faithful and elect."'* Here CLEMENT asserts, that the care, and government, and merciful dispensations of God, had an universal aspect, and not to one privileged nature or

* Refut. p. 316.

class of men to the exclusion of others. Jesus Christ is "Lord of all," both able and willing to "care for all men," who avail themselves of the common salvation. He "distributed his favour," or sent the gospel message, not to classes of natures, but to *nations*, "to Greeks and to Barbarians" indiscriminately, as his providence prepared the way, and as any people discovered an inclination to receive it,—which the author expresses by the phrase, "according to the fitness of every one." He could not mean a *spiritual* fitness among the "Greeks and Barbarians," as a reason why the Lord "distributed his favour," or sent the message of mercy to them without involving a great absurdity,—for what "fitness" of this kind could there be in gross idolaters? It must, therefore, refer to the external admission of the *means* of salvation, as opposed to a determined rejection of them. But while the Almighty Potentate thus distributes his favour among the nations, the question returns, Who of them became "faithful and elect," spiritual and worthy characters in the church? CLEMENT answers, not those who had a fatally good in opposition to others who had a fatally bad nature, as maintained by many heretical disturbers of the Christian church;----but "those of them who were predestinated, being called in his own time." These are "the faithful and elect," among all

nations, and in all ages. These, beside the common favour distributed to all their countrymen, and beside the common call of the gospel, addressed to all alike, have also the privilege of a distinguished character,—"the faithful and elect." But did they acquire this character *of themselves?* What had they which they did not receive? Who made them to differ from others around them? If God made them to differ, was it a sudden determination of his mind, when they, by a peradventure, made *themselves* good? If not, they must have been '*predestinated*' to be first favoured with the gospel, then to be effectually called, and afterwards to be faithful and approved characters, and consequently saved.

§ 12. JEROME is very explicit on the same point. '"In whom also we have obtained an 'inheritance, being predestinated according to 'the purpose of him, who worketh all things 'after the counsel of his own will.' 'It is to 'be considered, that predestination and purpose 'are here placed together, *according to which* '*God worketh all things* after the counsel of his 'own will. Not that all things which are done 'in the world are done with the will and counsel 'of God; for then *wicked things* might be im-'puted to God; but that *all things which he* '*does*, he does with counsel and will, because

'they are full of reason, and of the power of 'him who acts. We men will to do most things 'with counsel; but effect by no means follows 'the will. But *no one can resist Him*, to pre-'vent his doing whatever he wills. But he 'wills those things which are full of reason and 'counsel:' 'He wills all men to be saved, 'and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' 'But because no one is saved without his own 'will, (for we have free-will) *he wills us to will* '*that which is good*, that when we have willed 'it, he himself also may will to fulfil his own 'counsel in us."'* Here JEROME very explicitly declares his mind, that whatever God does, he does it "according to predestination and purpose." But as he proceeds to reconcile the irresistible will of God, with the free-will of man, by stating, that "*he wills us to will* that which is good," I am constrained to admire his ingenuity in the mode of expressing a general truth, when apparently unacquainted with the real and scientific principle of reconciliation.

§ 13. JEROME says, "He *wills us to will* that which is *good*." He very properly rejects the idea of God willing any "wicked things," and confines the predestinating purpose and efficiency to *what is good*. When therefore any one "wills

* Refut. p. 406.

that which is good," he ascribes it to the *will of God* "according to his predestination and purpose." Thus far the learned Father is clear and satisfactory. But a mind intent upon scientific evidence enquires, upon what principle are we authorised to say that "God wills us to will," when at the same time our will is *free?* How is this conceivable? Here are two wills,—one irresistible, the other free; what is it less than a plain contradiction, to suppose that the former operates upon the latter, according to a settled predestinating purpose, in order that it may "will that which is good." Thus we may reason and object, object and reason, in a circle and without end. Without a true principle, all such debates are but "vain jangling," and "opposition of science, falsely so called." But if we regard the will, both of God and the creature, not as the *source*, but as the *medium* of active power, the source of power being the *nature* of the agent, the difficulty vanishes. God's infinitely active nature, under the direction of unfathomable wisdom, exerts his power by the medium of his will. His knowledge is infinite, and therefore his purposes are infinitely wise; his power is omnipotent, and therefore the medium of that power, his will, never fails to be effectual. In every creature there is a principle of defectibility, else he would be identified with the Creator, who alone is without "varia-

bleness." And this principle, which is only a relative defect, though not the *will* of the creature, is yet a source of the manner of willing; otherwise the volitions would not be according to the nature of the agent,—a supposition to the last degree absurd: since if the agent do not will according to his nature, we might reasonably conclude that the divine volitions *may* be weak, unwise, or unholy! Now, seeing that the will operates according to the nature of which it is the medium, nothing remains but the existence of a *good nature* in order to secure a *good will.* As an effective will follows an effective nature, so a defective will follows a defective nature. All men, however, have, in themselves considered, a defective nature, and, as fallen, a corrupted nature, ever "inclined to evil:" At the same time the will remains free. What then is requisite to secure a *good will* in a *free-agent?* An influence from God, I answer, the source of all good, on man's nature, or heart, as the scriptures often express the idea, while the will, the medium of his power and nature, remains perfectly free, or exempt from compulsion and restraint. Here we have a satisfactory principle to reconcile certainty on the part of God, and freedom on the part of man; a principle, I will venture to affirm, against which no argument can be brought, no denial asserted, which may not be fairly met by

a *reductio ad absurdum.* As I am conscious of having no object in view but truth,—the establishment of true primary important principles in theology and moral science, I hope it will not be thought unsuitably presuming, if as a private individual I solicit the attention of thinking men to this point, and, if they are so disposed, to bring it to the test of clear and rational objection. Pure gold need not fear the heat of the furnace;—and what honest man would wish to give circulation to base coin?

§ 14. We now advert to what the Fathers, quoted by the Bishop, say regarding *Perseverance.* There is one passage from AMBROSE, which though already produced for another purpose, must not be omitted in this place. ' "*Perseverance* ' is not of the man who willeth, or of him who ' runneth; for it is not in the power of man: ' but *it is of God,* who pitieth, *that you may be* ' *able to complete what you have begun.*" '* What AMBROSE evidently designs to inculcate is this; that, though it is our incumbent *duty* to will and to run, that is, to use our utmost exertion in the way of holy obedience, the source of our perseverance is "God, who pitieth." If they who have begun well in the race of spiritual and holy obedience, obtain the prize of perfection,

* Refut. p. 381.

this completion is "of God." I believe the modern Calvinists will be very well satisfied with this conclusion, *viz.* That all those who finally attain the perfection of glory, by perseverance in holiness, attain it by the "power and grace of God." For my own part, I consider all other points, related to the subject, of comparatively little moment. This point is of *practical* utility, as tending to draw the heart to GOD every moment of time and every step of our progress; to him from whom our strength is derived, and who alone can crown our efforts with success. But the discussion of the question *a priori*, Who shall persevere, is apt to degenerate into useless speculations, greatly resembling another question, "Are there few that be saved?" The answer of incarnate wisdom was not to gratify speculative curiosity, but to rouse to holy solicitude and suitable exertion, "Strive to enter in at the straight gate."

§ 15. AUGUSTINE makes these remarks: '"The thief was justified, who, when all his 'limbs were fixed upon the cross, and having 'these two things at liberty, with his *heart* he 'believed unto righteousness, with his mouth 'confessed unto salvation, and immediately 'merited [obtained] this assurance, "To-day 'shalt thou be with me in Paradise." For *his good 'works would have followed*, if he had lived any

'considerable time among men, *after he 'received grace;* they had however not pre-'ceded."'* This proves that, in the view of AUGUSTINE, "grace received" was a *sure principle* of good works following. And it is for this we contend, that grace received by the will and purpose of God, ensures persevering obedience and well-doing. — The reader will recollect, that my present object is not to collect from the writings of the Fathers all the passages on the respective points in debate, but to produce from the Bishop's own extracts a few passages that militate, in their fair construction, against his own avowed principles.

§ 16. Let us consider next what the Fathers say on the subject of *co-operation.* If at any time they contradict themselves or one another (as they often do), that is not my concern. To avoid inconsistencies the first principles of truth ought to be strong and clear, and well settled in the mind. Neither ingenuity nor even piety (though the latter will avail more than the former) will prove a sufficient substitute in close investigations. However, some of them were far better reasoners than others. AUGUSTINE: '"I 'have applied my heart to fulfil thy statutes

* Refut. p. 438.

'alway." He who says, I have applied my 'heart, had already said, "*incline my heart* 'unto thy testimonies;" that we may under-'stand that this is at the same time *both the* '*gift of God and the exertion of our own will.*— 'The words of the apostle are, "Work out your 'own salvation with fear and trembling." Why 'then do I work out my salvation with fear and 'trembling, since it is in my power to work 'out my salvation? Do you wish to hear, why 'it is to be done with fear and trembling? '"For it is God which worketh in you:" there-'fore with fear and trembling. Because what 'the humble man obtains, the proud man loses. 'If then it be God which worketh in us, why 'is it said, Work out your own salvation? Be-'cause *he so worketh in us, that we also work.* '"Be thou my helper," points out that he also 'is a worker, who calls for a helper."'* Here AUGUSTINE acknowledges, with the Psalmist, that it is God's gift to incline the heart, or to infuse the principle; yet that "he so worketh in us, that we also work," or "exert our own will." The duty is ours to seek, but the operation is first God's, that ours may follow.

§ 17 The same Father has the following

* Refut. p. 430.

observations, among many other to the same purpose: '"To be strengthened with might,' 'he [the apostle], says, 'by his Spirit.' This 'is the spirit of grace. Observe what he 'desires. He *asks* from God *this very thing* 'which he *requires* from men; because that 'God may be willing to give, you also *ought* to 'suit your will to receive. How can you be '*willing* to receive the grace of divine goodness, 'who do not open the bosom of your *will?* He 'says, 'that he may grant you:' for you have 'it not unless he grants it you; 'That he may 'grant you to be strengthened with might by 'his Spirit:' for if he grants you to be strength-'ened with might, then he will grant you not 'to faint—*The whole is from God;* not however 'as if we were asleep; not as if we exert no endea-'vour; not as if we do not will.—You will be 'the *work of God*, not only because you are a '*man*, but because you are *righteous*. For it is '*better* to be righteous, than that you should be 'a man. If *God* made you a man, and *you made* '*yourself righteous*, you make a better thing 'than God made." He however adds, "He 'that made you without yourself, does not 'justify you without yourself.—He made you 'without your knowing it, he justifies you when 'you are willing."'* In these passages we observe

* Refut. pp. 433, 434.

what God requires of man, that is, " to be willing to receive;" and " this is *the very thing* which we ask from God." We *ought* to have a suitable will; but we have it not of ourselves; therefore we " ask from God this very thing which he requires." This clearly shews, that our duty is one thing, our ability another: and consequently, that without God's immediate and predeterminating influence, the effect will not follow. " The whole is from God," yet not so as to excuse our supineness. If we could not " make ourselves," much less can we " make ourselves righteous." Yet, is our voluntary concurrence required, without which we have no right to expect the blessing. The same author observes elsewhere, that ' " the *will* ' *itself* and the action, are assisted by God, ' and so assisted that we *cannot will* or do any ' thing well without that assistance."' And again, ' " We have proved by the foregoing ' testimonies of the holy scriptures, that there ' is free-will in man, to live well and to act ' rightly, so let us see what the divine testimo- ' nies are concerning *grace, without which we can* ' *do nothing*."' *

§ 18. CHRYSOSTOM, speaking of Judas and Peter, observes: ' " The one *enjoying great*

* Refut. pp. 448, 449.

'*assistance*, was not benefited, because he was 'not willing, and did not contribute his own 'exertions; but the other [Peter] *having a ready* '*will, fell because he did not enjoy any assistance*, 'for *virtue is composed of these two things*. 'Wherefore, I beseech you not to be supine, 'referring every thing to God, nor to think 'that, being diligent, you can do every thing 'right by your own labours. In these mysteries, '*it is the part of God to give grace*, and *of man* '*to supply faith*.'' * In one part of this passage we have a very important truth, that "virtue is composed of these two things," divine assistance and "a ready will." But when the author represents Peter as "having a ready will" *when* he "fell," his notions are confused: and when he speaks of Judas as "enjoying great assistance," he is more declamatory than judicious. For what evidence is there that Judas had more assistance than Peter, or that Peter *when he fell* had a more ready will than Judas? That Judas had "great assistance," in one sense, is plain, from the circumstance of his being one of the twelve apostles: he enjoyed converse with Christ, heard his discourses, saw his miracles, preached repentance, partook of the sacred supper, &c. But this "assistance," or more properly *privilege*, was common to all the apostles, irrespective of

* Refut. pp. 488, 491.

the state of their minds. In representing Peter as "not enjoying any assistance" when he *fell*, the meaning of the words is evidently changed from that of external privilege to internal operation; for it is a plain fact that the former continued with Peter, as well as with Judas. It was, therefore, the internal operation of grace that Peter did not enjoy when he fell,—in other words, he was left to himself. Nor is there any evidence that this was not the case *always* with Judas, as far as relates to real piety. When CHRYSOSTOM says, "it is the part of God to give *grace*," he must mean, in order to be consistent with himself, internal influence; since it is that, in connexion with a ready will, of which "virtue is composed," which must needs be inward grace. This is further evident from its being represented as that "assistance" which Peter "did not enjoy" when his fall was occasioned; while he *did* enjoy every external assistance as at other times. Of inward grace, therefore, and a ready will, "virtue is composed." Consequently no exercise of will can be virtuous, which has not grace for its principle. Yet this principle itself, is not *virtue*, but the basis or principle of virtue, which influences the will to what is properly called virtue, or a virtuous action. Thus "virtue is composed of these two things;" and thus also "it is the part of God

to give grace, and of men to supply faith," or to exercise *belief*.

§ 19. We shall now, finally, examine what the same Father, CHRYSOSTOM, says upon *human weakness*. ' " In proof of what I have said, I ' will quote to you the words of Christ himself: ' he said to Peter, ' Behold Satan hath desired ' to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; ' but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail ' not:' What does this sifting mean? To whirl ' about, to move, to shake, as when things are ' sifted; but I, says he, prevented it, knowing ' that you cannot bear temptation. For the ' expression, ' that your faith may not fail,' ' shews that *if he had permitted, his faith would* ' *have failed*." '* This passage is explanatory of the preceding, shewing that the assistance which Peter " did not enjoy," was a partial not a total defect. The assistance so far continued as to preserve the existence of faith as a principle, but not so far as to preserve its victorious exercise. For while the principle, as well as the exercise of faith, admits of degrees of vigour, its existence depends, not on its own indefectible nature, much less on the potency of free-will, but on the power and continued influence of Christ. So great is human weak-

* Refut. p. 459.

ness, even in the vessels of mercy, in proficients, in Peter the courageous, zealous, determined disciple of Christ, that "if he had permitted, his faith," root and branch, "would have failed." That he had free-will is certain: but free-will of itself is weak and unstable. If faith cannot stand its ground without the substratum of grace, assisting and upholding grace, — how can free-will?

SECT. III.

Quotations from the Fathers doubtful in Expression, but not in Meaning, against the Calvinists.

§ 1. Passages respecting *two natures*, from IGNATIUS, IRENÆUS, and ORIGEN. § 2. Remarks on *ancient Heretics* who held two natures. § 3. On BARDESANES and VALENTINUS. § 4. BASILIDES and CARPOCRATES. § 5. MANES. § 6, 7. Observations on these Heresiarchs and their dogmas.

§ 8. Quotations on Christ's *purchase*, from CLEMENT of Rome. § 9. From ATHANASIUS; and § 10. From JEROME.

§ 11. Concerning *human worthiness*, from JUSTIN MARTYR. § 12. Remarks on JUSTIN; and § 13. On the term *worthiness*. § 14. Quotations on the same subject, from CYRIL; also § 15, 16. From BASIL and CHRYSOSTOM. § 17. These views compared with scripture.

§ 18. On the insufficiency of *Reason*, from JUSTIN MARTYR.

§ 19. On a *necessity* of consequence, from JUSTIN MARTYR. § 20. The subject continued, from JUSTIN, CHRYSOSTOM and IRENÆUS.

§ 21. On man's *right*, from TERTULLIAN.

§ 22. On *Free Will* and *Power*, from TERTULLIAN; also § 23. From ORIGEN, EUSEBIUS, and AUGUSTINE; and § 24, 25. From JUSTIN MARTYR. § 26. The same subject pursued, from ORIGEN. § 27, 28. Remarks on his opinion about the *beginning* of receding from good.

§ 29—31. On *Grace* and *Free agency*, from IRENÆUS and HILARY.

§ 32. On *Faith*, from IRENÆUS. § 33. From CYRIL; and § 34. From CHRYSOSTOM.

§ 35. On *Regeneration*, from GREGORY Naz. and § 36, 37. From JUSTIN MARTYR.

§ 38. On *Election*, from JEROME.

§ 39. Concluding Remarks.

§ 1. MANY quotations are produced by the Bishop against the Calvinists, in which the Fathers reprobate the notion of *two natures* in man. And this is done, probably, because

we sometimes speak of two natures in the Christian, one corrupt and the other holy. We maintain that every true or spiritual Christian has a depraved nature from the first Adam, and a spiritual nature or principle from the second Adam.—How, indeed, any one can deny this statement without at the same time impugning the authority of the inspired writings upon the point, is to me inconceivable: nor am I able to form a conjecture how the Bishop of Lincoln can controvert the sentiment we contend for, without condemning a great part of his own "Refutation." —Let us, however, attend to some of the Fathers upon the subject of *two natures* in men. IGNATIUS: '"I do not speak of two *natures of men*, but 'that the *one man* is sometimes of God, sometimes of the devil. If any one be pious, he 'is a man of God; but if any one be impious, 'he is a man of the devil, being made so, not 'by nature, but by his own will."'* This is an entire quotation. Another follows from IRENÆUS: '"Subdividing souls themselves, they say that 'some are by nature good, and some by nature 'bad."'† Again, from the last mentioned author: '"They (the Valentinians) say, that some 'men are good by nature, and some bad."'‡ Again, from CLEMENT of Alexandria we have this insulated extract: '"He (Valentinus) too,

* Refut. p. 288. † Ib. p. 514. ‡ Ib. p. 515.

'like Basilides, supposes a race (γενος) which is 'saved by nature."'* Of the same kind is the following passage from ORIGEN: '"Those who, 'coming from the schools of Marcion, and Va-'lentinus, and Basilides, have been taught that 'there are different natures of souls."'†

§ 2. The reader may well express his surprise at the Bishop's conduct in producing these extracts against the Calvinists. Indeed the *words* "two natures" may be found occasionally in Calvinistic writers; but is there any similarity of sentiment, between them and the quoted heresies? Not the least. The Saturninians, Marcionites, Bardesanians, Valentinians, Basilidians, Carpocratians, &c. according to a corrupt philosophy, or rather a visionary hypothesis, held that two Creators formed two kinds of men, possessed of two natures directly opposite, according to the characters of the two Deities; that is, one benevolent, the other malignant. SATURNINUS held the doctrine of two eternal principles, one good and the other evil; that this world and its inhabitants were created by subordinate Deities; that the "nature" given to men by their immediate creator was a mere animal life; that the good eternal principle added to them another nature, which was a

* Refut. p. 518. † Ib. p. 520.

rational soul. Thus, according to this insane dreamer, every man had "two natures," derived from two Creators;—and, to perfect his folly, he further held, that there are two kinds of men; the one kind, just mentioned, who are by "nature" well disposed; the other kind, formed by the evil deity, who are by "nature" wickedly disposed; and that the difference now subsisting among men, as good and bad, must arise from these causes.

§ 3. MARCION also had similar notions respecting two eternal principles, one good, the other evil, and a middle deity besides, who had himself two mixed natures, composed of something good and something bad. Mankind, he fancied, had "two natures," good, and bad; and this middle deity and the evil principle, were perpetually contending for dominion over these "two natures" respectively. BARDESANES also held that mankind had "two natures," one formed by the Supreme Being, the other by an evil principle, the prince and author of all wickedness and misery. From the former proceeded reason; from the latter, passion. To this he added, that all matter was of a "malignant nature," and consequently all human bodies, whose original framer was the evil principle. VALENTINUS, in like manner, maintained that mankind had "two natures," consisting of an

equal portion of what was subtle and what was gross; while the framer of these two natures was not the supreme Being, but a generated deity whom he called the *Demiurge.* This offspring of two of the *Eons* (of whom VALENTINUS created more than thirty) is represented as arbitrary and arrogant, aspiring to supreme dominion, as the God of the Jews, keeping mankind in slavery, &c.: but Jesus, one of the *Eons,* came to our world to chastise *Demiurge,* and to deliver mankind from his tyranny! It must not be omitted that the mother of this tyrannical pretender resolved to add to the two natures which her son gave to mankind a third nature far better than the other two.

§ 4. BASILIDES was a mystic of no less extravagance. He held that mankind had "two natures," derived from two sources, that is, one nature from malignant matter, self-animated and eternal, but moulded originally into human form by angelic hands; the other nature was a principle of reason added to it by the kindness of the supreme deity. But still he left them under the dominion of their first formers; who themselves, in process of time, fell into a state of depravity. To complete his blasphemous nonsense, he asserted that one of these was the God of the Jews, to counteract whose pretensions, and to deliver mankind from the "two

natures" now enslaved, Christ was sent by his Father, the supreme deity. CARPOCRATES differed little from BASILIDES, except by adding a still greater portion of impiety to his philosophical reveries.

§ 5. These heresies, among many others of minor consideration, made their appearance in the second century. In the third, the *Manichæans* made themselves prominent. MANES, the Persian, also held "two natures" in mankind, one sensual, the other rational; the latter derived from a good, the former from an evil deity. This impious magician, in common with the rabblement of Gnostics before mentioned, pronounced all matter to be eternally corrupt, and therefore denied a resurrection. The human body, he supposed, was originally formed by the prince of darkness, and was the prison of man's "two natures," or "two souls;" and the design of Christ, in coming into our world, was to liberate the better nature both from its lustful companion and from its prison; when, having completed his mission, he returned to his native residence, the sun, favouring the better part of mankind with MANES as his Paraclete!

§ 6. Such is a concise account of the fantastical impieties of these heresiarchs,—who

leaving the plain scriptures of truth, bewildered themselves and their followers among the fables and mythologies of the oriental heathen philosophy, falsely so called,—and to whom the Bishop of Lincoln would apparently be very glad to persuade us that the Calvinists are closely allied. "Opinions of earliest Heretics resembling tenets of Calvinism," *proved* from the ancient Fathers! Nothing can be plainer: as these Heretics held, that there are "two natures" in men, so the Calvinists maintain, that "by nature we are children of wrath," have a "carnal mind," which is "enmity against God," and that, by a plan of mercy and grace, some are "made partakers of the divine nature."

§ 7. On the heresies above recited I would make a few remarks. 1. The specimens produced of the tenets of their leaders, are but a small part of their profane jargon. 2. Some of them put forth their germs in the apostolic age, and by degrees grew up, and infested a great part of the Christian church, for many centuries, though often assuming different aspects, according to the prepossessions of each prominent leader. 3. Many of them, not content with dogmatizing with a fertile imagination, unrestrained either by judgment or any tolerable consistency, permitted their infatuated adherents to indulge in the most licentious practices.

4. It is not surprising if the ancient Fathers frequently adverted to their tenets and practices in their discourses and writings. 5. A proper knowledge of the prevailing heresy which each writer or speaker had in view, is the true key to open the meaning of many arguments and phrases employed by the Christian Fathers. 5. The Bishop of Lincoln has widely erred of the mark, while comparing the Gnostic and Manichean notions of "two natures" in men, with the sentiments of Calvinists, who keep closely to God's holy word, respecting the true character of Jehovah and the real state of man, as either sinful or gracious.

§ 8. We shall now examine what some of the Fathers remark on *Christ's purchase.* CLEMENT of Rome has this passage: '"Let us look 'stedfastly at the blood of Christ, and see how 'precious his blood is in the sight of God; 'which being shed for our salvation, *has obtained* '*the grace of repentance for all the world.* Let 'us search into all ages, and learn that our 'Lord has in every one of them given *opportunity for repentance* to all such as are willing 'to turn unto him."'* This quotation may have some appearance of opposition to modern Calvinists, otherwise it would not have been

* Refut. p. 288.

produced by his Lordship as an entire extract, unconnected with other matter: but where is the reality of opposition? CLEMENT explains what he means by "the grace of repentance" by an "opportunity of repentance;"—and we maintain precisely the same. We profess that "the blood of Christ" (expressive of his whole humiliation unto death,) is a price of infinite value; that the proclamation of this plan of mercy is a "grace," a great favour; affording to the children of men an "opportunity for repentance;" and that "all such as are willing to return" unto God through Jesus Christ, shall obtain "forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace." Nor is it true that we hold, (whatever might be the conclusion of CALVIN) that there is any reprobating decree to prevent repentance.

§ 9. The following passage from ATHANASIUS has more an apparent than a real opposition to our sentiments: '"By his death *salvation* '*came to all, and every creature was ransomed.* 'He is the life of all, even he, who like 'a sheep gave up his own body to death, as '*a ransom for the salvation of all.*"—"That 'he might *take away sin from all the race.*"'* These expressions, I conceive, must have been

* Refut. p. 345, 346.

designed to convey one of these two ideas: either, first, that "all the race" of mankind are to be actually delivered from the guilt, power, and effects of sin; or, secondly, that the death of Christ is an adequate ransom, or price of redemption, for all, in such a sense as to entitle all who apply for an interest in it on gospel terms. The former, his Lordship will not assert, I presume; and with the latter meaning we agree. The provision made, or divinely constituted means, is all-sufficient, and thereby an opportunity is afforded to all, to whom these glad tidings are proposed, for the remission of sin, and for obtaining salvation.

§ 10. The quotation from JEROME, which follows, indicates a degree of rashness in the manner of assertion, but his meaning is far from being opposed to us: and I may add, that many passages might be easily adduced out of CALVIN's works of a similar tendency. JEROME's words are: '"John the Baptist utters a false-'hood when he points to Christ, and says, ''Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away 'the sin of the world,' if there be still *persons 'in the world whose sins Christ has not taken 'away.*"'* What can the author intend, but that the atonement made is of adequate suffi-

* Refut. p. 411.

ciency for all? Surely he could not mean that the minds and consciences of all persons in the world were freed from the dominion of sin, or "purged from dead works." But as there does not appear any middle meaning, and as he could not intend the latter, we agree with him in the former. "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us" to whom it is applied, "from all sin." To assert that it takes away sin from those persons to whom it is not applied, is to contradict the whole tenor of scripture, and to outrage common sense, while the sentiment itself is of the most licentious tendency. But to maintain that the sacrifice for sin is adequately sufficient for every person in the world, and is mercifully proposed as such to be received, on the terms of repentance and faith, without any reprobating decree to the contrary, is, in my apprehension, "a doctrine according to godliness." I must, however, observe, that neither chance, nor yet the potent force of free-will, is ever likely to put any person in possession of its efficacy, without the assistance of sovereign grace.

§ 11. His Lordship has quoted some passages out of the Fathers which relate to *human worthiness*, that appear adverse to our sentiments; — the opposition still being more in sound than in sense. For example, JUSTIN

MARTYR says: ' " We maintain that no wicked ' or covetous person, no traitor, no virtuous ' person can escape God; and that every one ' will go into everlasting punishment or salva- ' tion, *according to the merit of his actions.*— ' That punishments and chastisements and *good* ' *rewards* are given *according to the worth of the* ' *actions of every one,* having learnt it from the ' prophets, we declare it to be true."'* Here probably the Bishop supposes that JUSTIN maintains a doctrine which we deny. We sometimes say, that we have no merit of our own to recommend us to the favour of God; and he says that rewards and punishments are (κατ' αξίαν των πραξεων) " according to the worthiness of the actions" of every one. In the original the phrase in both places is precisely the same; though in one place *translated* " worth," in the other " merit." Perhaps these terms are considered as synonymous; however, we hold no doctrine inconsistent with what JUSTIN evidently intends. Actions have worthiness in one respect, and not in another; or for one end, and not for another.

§ 12. When we profess, that we have " no merit of our own," or, " no worthiness of our own," to recommend us to God; we mean, that

* Refut. p. 291.

we have nothing which can be a ground of pardon and acceptance, in the sense of the apostle, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." The contrast here is, between our works, with any worth or merit they may have, and another ground of recommendation and acceptance appointed and revealed. This is no other than the mercy of God through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," who is the foundation of apostolic doctrine, and the foundation of our faith, repentance, and hope. But should any one tell us, that there is no difference in the *quality* of actions, that one is not better or more worthy than another, as some of the heretics opposed by JUSTIN did, and some sceptics now do; we would reply with him, that human actions *have* a quality of worthiness or unworthiness, that there *is* an essential difference between obedience and disobedience, and that this difference will be produced in judgment. This the holy scriptures abundantly testify. "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* "Wherefore we labour (or endeavour) that whether present or absent, we may

* Eccles. xii. 14.

be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." *

§ 13. "Worthiness" is a comparative idea. Only a person properly divine, is "worthy" of religious adoration. No one in the universe, but "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," the divine Redeemer, was found "*worthy*" to open the "book" of prophecy. Compared with God's perfect law, and the requirements of holiness and justice, no descendant of Adam is found "worthy" to say, I am perfectly conformed to them. Only Jesus Christ was, in this respect, "worthy;" and therefore to his worthiness, and not to our own, we as imperfect creatures are directed to look, that, interested in him, we may be able to plead exemption from the penalty we have incurred by transgressions and failures. But if we compare the penitent with the impenitent, the believing with the unbelieving, the virtuous with the vicious, the holy with the unholy, the obedient with the disobedient, or the fruitful with the fruitless; then we justly say, that the former are "worthy" and the latter are worthless. The one sort is

* 2 Cor. v. 9, 10.

approved, the other disapproved; the one is rewarded according to the divine promise, the other punished according to the divine threatening. And in this sense we can freely say with JUSTIN, "that every one will go into everlasting punishment or salvation according to the *worthiness* (i. e. the moral character) of his actions."

§ 14. In the same manner we agree with CYRIL of Jerusalem, when he says, '"Have, O 'man, a sincere soul, on account of him who 'searcheth the heart and the reins. For as 'those who are about to enlist soldiers, examine 'the ages and persons of those whom they 'enlist, so the Lord also in choosing souls for 'his service, examines the will, and if any one 'has a concealed hypocrisy, he immediately 'rejects him as unfit for true service. But if he 'finds a person *worthy*, he readily gives him 'grace. He does not give that which is holy 'to the dogs."'* Who is the "worthy person?" The sincere, as opposed to the hypocrite. What does God give him? A *peculiar favour*, the "seal of salvation," as he further explains it. And this we also maintain as perfectly scriptural. "Thou requirest truth in the inward parts." "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to

* Refut. p. 347.

the humble." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

§ 15. Thus also BASIL: '"The Lord will 'take away strength from a sinful people, but 'he gives strength to them who act justly. 'For unto every one that hath shall be given;' 'but he who is *enabled to do good works* becomes '*worthy of a blessing from God.*"'* This is an entire quotation brought against the Calvinists, but for what possible purpose? maintaining, as we do, that he who is "enabled to do good works" becomes "worthy (i. e. a suitable subject) of an *additional* blessing from God." We also agree with the following passage in CHRYSOSTOM: '"Let us then, I beseech you, imitate 'that just person, and be *diligent to contribute* '*our exertions, that we may make ourselves worthy* '(i. e. suitable subjects) of assistance from God. 'For on that account he waits for opportunities 'from us, that he may display his great kind-'ness. Let us not, then, through negligence 'deprive ourselves of his gifts; but let us hasten 'and be eager to lay hold of the beginning, and 'to enter on the path that leads to virtue, that, 'enjoying assistance from above, we may be 'able to arrive at the end. For we cannot 'rightly do any thing that is good, if we do not

* Refut. p. 366.

'enjoy aid from above."'* What Calvinist ever supposed that men ought to remain in a state of stupid indifference or criminal negligence, in order to obtain "assistance from God," and enjoy "aid from above," without which "we cannot rightly do any thing which is good?" Do not we also, with CHRYSOSTOM, endeavour to rouse men from their lethargy, exhorting them to search the scriptures, to examine themselves, to consider their ways, to attend to God's testimony, and assuring them that they have no right to expect either divine assistance or any blessing from God, but in a diligent use of appointed means?

§ 16. To the same purpose are many other passages of this author; particularly the following: '"Since then there are such snares, and 'such attacks, do thou lead me in the way; for 'I have need of thy assistance. For *to be led in 'the way is derived from him;* but *let it be our 'endeavour to be worthy* of being conducted by 'that hand. For if you be unclean, that hand 'does not direct you; or if you be covetous or 'have any other spot."'† "*Worthy* of being conducted," that is, *guidable.* Now this is what we constantly inculcate upon our children and domestics, our auditors and associates. Does

* Refut. p. 463. † Ib. p. 469.

his Lordship suppose that we wish them to continue obstinate and refractory, or remain like blocks until they are spiritually animated? Again: '"He speaks of the inexpressible blessings of those who received him, and briefly comprehends them in these words, saying, 'As many as received him, he gave them power to become the sons of God." Whether they be slaves, whether they be free; whether they be Greeks, Barbarians, or Scythians; whether they be unwise or wise; whether they be women, or men; whether they be young or old; whether they be ignoble or noble; whether they be rich or poor; whether they be governors, or whether they be governed; he says, *all are thought worthy of the same honour*."'* This passage clearly proves with what latitude CHRYSOSTOM, in common with the other Greek Fathers, used the term (αξιος) *worthy*. "All are thought worthy," that is, *suitable objects*, to whom the gospel, the universal favour, should be proclaimed; the inequality of their conditions, whether external or internal, forming no bar of exception. And when they by "faith, and the grace of the Spirit," as he afterwards adds, receive the proffered blessing, they have "stamped upon them one royal character." Thus, in both respects, they are *alike* "worthy."

* Refut. p. 489.

§ 17. In a similar latitude of meaning the sacred scriptures use not only the terms worthy and unworthy, but also clean and unclean, holy and unholy, with many others. Thus it was revealed to Peter, that the Gentiles ought not to be regarded any longer unclean, unholy, or unworthy of the gospel message, in the view of a merciful God. By the mediatorial work of Christ, "the middle wall of partition" was pulled down, and in this respect all nations were thought equally "worthy" of the benefit. "What God hath cleansed, call not thou common or unclean." If God regard the vilest of characters "worthy," in this relative sense, of having salvation by Christ proclaimed to them, so should we: and hence our exertions to send missionaries to idolaters, and the most abandoned of human characters among the Heathen. But who would infer thence, that they are worthy in a moral sense, before a change in them is effected? When, indeed, any of them become new creatures in Christ Jesus, and manifest by repentance, faith, and new obedience, that they have "the grace of the Spirit," they are thought "worthy" of Christian fellowship. And when, as professing Christians, they shew the reality of their faith and profession of godliness by their works,—walking in the holy ways of Christ, exemplifying the peculiar spirit of Christianity, and persevering therein unto the end of life,—we are bound in charity, judging according to the

testimony of God's word, that they are "*worthy* to walk with the Lamb in white;" that is, are suitable subjects to receive such favour.

§ 18. We sometimes speak of the insufficiency of the powers of *reason* for answering certain purposes in religion; and therefore we are confronted with the following language of JUSTIN MARTYR: '"Our original existence was 'not owing to ourselves; but to follow those 'things which are pleasing to him, *through the* '*powers of reason* with which he has endowed 'us, *this persuades us and leads us to faith.*"'* But what Calvinist opposes the use of reason for *this* purpose? Reason is the faculty by which we compare ideas, and draw conclusions. By this faculty we are enabled to investigate the evidences of revealed religion, to compare the claims of a pretended revelation with the true, to compare scripture with scripture, and one dispensation of religion with another. By this faculty we examine the divine testimony concerning the person, the work, and character of Jesus Christ, and conclude that he not only claims, but also deserves our hearts and lives; and thus, "through the powers of reason" we are led to *believe.* In this respect, *reason* "persuades us, and leads

* Refut. p. 291.

us to faith," and this is evidently JUSTIN's meaning.

§ 19. Because the modern Calvinists advocate the cause of a *necessity of consequence*, in opposition to absolute contingence or mere chance, the Bishop has produced many quotations from the Fathers, in order to shew that their sentiments and ours are opposed to each other. JUSTIN MARTYR: '"But lest any one 'should imagine that I am asserting that things 'happen according to the *necessity of fate*, 'because I have said that things are foreknown, 'I proceed to refute that opinion also.—And, 'again, if mankind had not the power, by *free-'will*, to avoid what is disgraceful, and to choose 'what is good, they would not be responsible 'for their actions."'* We also, as well as JUSTIN, deny a *fatal necessity* of persons and actions. Fate, or the doctrine of fate, declares, that persons and actions are necessary in such a sense, that they could not have been otherwise; now this we reject, because we believe that there is neither a person nor an action which might not have been otherwise, had it been the good pleasure of God. Supposing, however, persons placed hypothetically, in certain circumstances, notwithstanding any conceivable

* Refut. pp. 291, 292.

freedom of will, nothing is contingent to the view of God. He knows what he will do, and he knows what we will do. If he pleases, we shall do well; but if left to our own defectibility, and its negative cause, he knows we will not do well; though every thing which it becomes him as a righteous governor to grant, should continue the same. The positive cause of all our good is from him, but the negative cause of all our evil is from ourselves exclusively; free-will in both cases remaining the same, as before proved. It is a manifest absurdity to talk of a free action, when past, as having no ground of its existence, either in God or in the creature, before it took place. Every action had some cause, either efficient or deficient, else it never could have taken place; and this cause, be it what it may, must be known to God no less before than after the act. To omniscience therefore the act must appear certainly future, if that foreknown cause be not prevented by him who alone is adequate to prevent it: and this certain futurition of all events which actually take place, we properly denominate *hypothetical* necessity, and sometimes a necessity of consequence. These distinctions we are constrained to make in polemic discussions, though we think it unsuitable and needless to impose them on unlearned auditories.

§ 20. The subsequent passages are of similar

import. JUSTIN MARTYR: '"Neither do we 'say, that men act or suffer *according to fate*, 'but that every one does rightly, or sins, '*according to his choice*."'* His choice, beyond doubt, is the *immediate* cause of the quality of his actions: but this does not imply that the choice itself had no adequate cause; or that it was not foreknown as a future certainty. CHRYSOSTOM: '"Christ says — 'It must needs 'be that offences come;' not weakening the 'freedom of choice, nor imposing any *necessity* 'or *force* upon our conduct; but foretelling 'what would *certainly* happen from the wicked 'disposition of men, which was about to happen, 'not because of his prediction, but because of 'the disposition of those who would admit of no 'remedy. For those things did not happen 'because he foretold them; but *because they would* '*certainly happen*, therefore he foretold them."'† What can be plainer than this quotation in favour our of hypothetical necessity? We are sufficiently persuaded, and so was CHRYSOSTOM, that the will of man is free; and yet there was a sufficient cause of the event, as a ground of certainty. What *kind* of necessity CHRYSOSTOM does oppose, is explained by himself, when he contrasts it with "freedom of choice," and explains it by the term "force;" an explanation in which we fully coincide. To the same effect

* Refut. p. 297. Ibid. p. 497.

is IRENÆUS's remark: '"All these things shew 'the free-will of man, and the counsel of God, 'exhorting against disobedience, but *not forcing* '*our wills.*"'* Also CLEMENT of Alexandria: '"Neither praise, nor dispraise, nor honours, 'nor punishments, would be just, if the soul 'had not the power of desiring and rejecting, and if vice were *involuntary.*"'† We hold no necessity that implies "forcing our wills," and which renders our actions "involuntary."

§ 21. TERTULLIAN very properly observes: '"Every one has a *right* belonging to *man*, and 'a natural power to worship that which he *thinks* '*right;* nor is any one injured or benefited by 'the religion of another. Nor is it *any part* of 'religion to *force religion*, which ought to be 'taken up *spontaneously, not by force.*"'‡ As the Bishop, in order to be consistent with his profession, must hold, that the established church is allied to, and inseparably connected with the state; and as he asserts that his church 'is not Calvinistic;'‖ he must, in self-consistency, exonerate the Calvinists from the public enforcing "act of uniformity." Why, then, it is natural to ask, does he produce this entire

* Refut. p. 305. † Ib. p. 312.

‡ Ib. p. 318. ‖ Ib. p. 590.

quotation from TERTULLIAN against us? Do we not maintain that "every one has a *right* to worship as he thinks right?" Or does he suppose that with us it is a "part of religion to *force* religion?" Or does he imagine that we have some enchanting chains with which we are able to drag "by force" an audience ἑκὼν ἀεκοντιγε θυμω? Were we to judge merely from the tendency of the quotation, we might suppose it to have been introduced to overthrow acts of uniformity, or to encourage the separatist to stand firm to his principles in opposition to civil "force" in matters of religion. But whatever might be his Lordship's real motive for transcribing the passage, he has most effectually concealed it from vulgar scrutiny.

§ 22. We have in the "Refutation" several quotations from the Fathers which treat of *free-will* and *power*, as if they stood 'opposed to the 'tenets of Calvinism;' but which, in their genuine import, are perfectly consistent with those tenets. Thus, for instance, TERTULLIAN: '"A law would not have been imposed on a 'person who had not *in his power* [i. e. at his 'option] the obedience due to the law; nor 'again would transgression have been threatened 'with death, if the contempt also of the law 'were not placed to the account of *free-will*.— 'He who should be found good or bad by

'*necessity and not voluntarily*, could not with 'justice receive the retribution of either good 'or evil.—Moreover, if you ask *whence that will* '*comes*, by which we will any thing *contrary to* '*the will of God*, I will tell you: *It comes from* '*ourselves*."'* The whole connexion shews that the author meant by the phrase "in his power" the same idea as is expressed by "at his option," in opposition to that which destroys liberty. In the last sentence, TERTULLIAN advances a very important sentiment, though it is more than probable that he was not aware of all the truth which the expressions are well adapted to convey. The sinfulness of a choice, "comes from ourselves." He was fully aware that the physical power of willing and choosing comes from God; what he therefore intends is the source of its "contrariety to the will of God," and which, in the strictest and fullest sense, "comes from ourselves" exclusively. This is that negative principle of defectibility which God has not in himself, and cannot possibly *impart* to the creature, because it is no object of power: I will add, that it is the only principle by which we can possibly account, in a satisfactory manner, for an endless number of phenomena in the moral world. Were it better understood by inquisitive minds, it would ex-

* Refut. pp. 319, 320.

clude a thousand perplexities, shew the folly of many past controversies, and exhibit in the most amiable light the true character of the blessed God.

§ 23. ORIGEN very well observes, (why his Lordship has quoted the passage against the Calvinists, is best known to himself): '"The 'soul is endowed with *free-will*, and is *at liberty* 'to incline either way; and therefore the judge-'ment of God is just, because the human soul, '*of its own accord*, obeys either good or bad 'advisers."'* The same introductory remark is applicable to the following observation of EUSEBIUS: '"So that it must be altogether 'acknowledged, that *we have liberty*, and *the* '*free-will of a rational and intelligent nature*."'† Does his Lordship know any Calvinist, or can he produce any Calvinistic author, who does not accord with EUSEBIUS's remark? Again, AUGUSTINE says: '"Every one is author of his 'own sin. Whence, if you doubt, attend to 'what is said above, that sins are avenged by 'the justice of God; for they would not be 'justly avenged unless they were committed 'with the *will*.—It follows —— that nothing 'makes the mind a companion of lust, except 'its *own free-will*."'‡ Who doubts it?

* Refut. p. 339. † Ib. p. 343. ‡ Ib. p. 413.

§ 24. On the same subject, JUSTIN MARTYR, in his Dialogue with TRYPHO, the Jewish fatalist, observes: '" But that those, whether angels or 'men, who are foreknown that they would be 'unjust, *are not wicked through the fault of God,* 'but that *each through his own fault* is what 'he is, I have shewn above. But that you 'may not have any pretence for saying, that 'Christ *must necessarily* have been crucified, or 'that in *your* [our] *race* there are transgressors, 'and that it *could not have been otherwise,* I 'have already observed in few words, that God 'desiring that men and angels should follow his 'will, determined to make them *with full power* '[freedom] *to act justly,* with the means of 'knowing by whom they were made, and 'through whom they were called into existence 'out of nothing; and with this condition, that 'they were to be judged by him if they acted 'contrary to right reason; and we men and 'angels shall be by ourselves convicted of 'having acted wickedly, unless we make haste 'to repent. But if the word of God declares 'beforehand, that some, both angels and men, 'will be hereafter punished, *because he knows* 'that they would persevere to the last in 'wickedness, *he foretold it,* but *not that God* '*made them such.* Wherefore if they will repent, '*all who are willing* to obtain mercy from God, '*have it in their power* [i. e. at their option];

'and the word pronounces them happy, saying, 'Blessed is he to whom God shall not impute 'sin.'"*

§ 25. Here JUSTIN evidently combats *fatalism.* He shews that angels and men "are not wicked through the fault of God," but "each through his own fault." And is not this the doctrine of modern Calvinists? And when he replies to TRYPHO's objection (οτι εδει Χριςον ςαυρωθηναι) "that Christ must necessarily have been crucified," and that (εν τω γενει ημων) "in our race there are transgressors," and "that it could not have been otherwise," he remarks, in opposition to fatal necessity, that it was God's counsel and will (ποιησαι τουτους αυτεξουσις προς δικαιοπραξιαν) "to make them with full freedom, or *at their own disposal,* to act justly." His object clearly is to establish freedom as opposed to fate: and this is further evident by his denying "that God made them such," that is, *wicked.* Then he further shews, against the *fatal* system, that "all who are *willing* to obtain mercy from God (δυναντται) "*may,*" or *have it at their option.* They "have it in their power," in the sense of a *potentia non peccandi;* that is, they are not forced to sin, but are left at perfect liberty from sinning. So that neither God nor fate urges them on to be wicked, or to "persevere to the last in wickedness." And when

* Refut. p. 295.

he says that it was not *necessary* that Christ should be crucified, he could not mean, without frightful impiety, that it was in no sense necessary, but that it was not by *fatal* necessity: he came to be a Saviour, not by fate, but by the merciful counsel and gracious pleasure of God. Nevertheless, as the crucifixion of Christ was infallibly certain, before it took place, it was therefore hypothetically necessary. For IF Christ came into our world as a perfect character, according to the divine purpose, and IF devils and wicked men (whose wickedness *originated in themselves,*) were not restrained in the execution of their purpose, there was an infallible ground of certainty, notwithstanding their freedom to any conceivable degree. All that was good in the whole affair was from God; all that was wicked, from the wickedness of the agents exclusively. God's part was effected by him, but the wickedness of the agents was only permitted, or not hindered. And he well knew how to over-rule their evil designs for the good of men and for his own praise. "The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath wilt thou restrain."

§ 26. In the same manner are to be understood the following quotations from ORIGEN: '"This also is settled in the doctrine of the 'church, that *every rational soul has free-will.*

'and that it has to contend against the devil 'and his angels, and the powers which oppose 'it, because they strive to burden it with sins: 'but we, if we live rightly and prudently, en-'deavour to rescue ourselves from this kind of 'burden. Whence, consequently, we may under-'stand, that *we are not subject to necessity, so as* '*to be compelled by all means* to do either bad or 'good things, *although it be against our will.* For 'if we be masters of our will, some powers, 'perhaps, may urge us to sin, and others assist 'us to safety; yet we are not *compelled by neces-*'*sity* to act either rightly or wrongly.—There 'is no nature which does not admit of good or 'evil, *except the nature of God, which is the* '*foundation of all good.*—The Creator indulged 'the minds formed by himself with voluntary 'and free motions, that the good in them might 'be their own, since it was preserved by their 'own will; but *indolence and dislike of exertion* '*in preserving good,* and aversion and indif-'ference to better things, *caused the beginning* '*of receding from good.*"'* In these passages many important verities are contained. "Every rational soul has free-will." "We are not subject to necessity, so as to be *compelled* by all means,—although it be *against our will.*" "The nature of God, which is the foundation of all

* Refut. pp. 322, 323.

good, does not admit of good or evil;" but "there is *no other* nature which does not." "Indolence and dislike of exertion in preserving good, and aversion and indifference to better things, *caused the beginning of receding from good.*" This last sentence is an attempt to account for the origin of moral evil; and is unobjectionable, as far as it goes.

§ 27. But as ORIGEN was writing on a point of moral philosophy, an opponent had a right to ask, *how* came "indolence and dislike," or *how* came "aversion and indifference," to take place in free-agents? Is not each of these a moral evil? Is moral evil the cause of itself? Or is it uncaused? Surely to be uncaused is the exclusive prerogative of the self-existent Being. Here neither ORIGEN, nor any of the Fathers, have a word to say,—but merely impose silence upon the enquirer. But why must he be silent? Because "*secret* things belong to God." The enquirer however urges, that this is a mere evasion, until evidence is produced that it *ought* to be reckoned among the divine arcana: for that there *are* many things of that description, does by no means prove that this is one of them.—But it is *unprofitable* to enquire further.—What! supposing the truth be ascertained,—and one of the most radical of all truths. How can you prove to me, adds the querist, that *any* truth,

especially any primary truth in morals, is unprofitable. I do not want to pry into forbidden secrets, but tell me plainly, without any evasion, what is the true cause of criminal indolence, or dislike, or aversion, or indifference? Probably, the right knowledge of the cause of the disease, may lead me to the remedy: and surely this will be a very *profitable* thing.—He receives for answer, If we can but be content with our ignorance of this punctilio "till we get to heaven," we shall then know all about it.—He replies, if you were to call the cause of gravitation, or the motions of the heavenly bodies a "punctilio," it might be endured; but I can never admit, while I possess the use of my faculties, that the cause of "indolence" should be viewed in that light. Besides, if I have not a cure of indolence (towards which the knowledge of the cause may be very profitable) I may never get to heaven! I want, therefore, to know it now, if knowable,—and the sooner the better.—But it is one of the *unknowables*.—A bold assertion; how came you to *know* that? Is it self-evident, or will it admit of proof? And be pleased to recollect, if you cannot prove it to be among the "unknowables," even *you* must allow, that it may be known.

§ 28. Whatever God in his wisdom and mercy has revealed, or has not revealed, we may

be morally certain that he has not prohibited so profitable a knowledge as that of the cause and cure of "indolence!" If I look into myself, I may see not only a depraved nature, but also a negative principle of defectibility. By this I am alarmed, and flee to God as my helper. The more clearly I perceive the cause of indolence or indifference, and at the same time the cause of its cure, the more I cleave to God all-sufficient, the more I depend upon him for aid, the more humbly I walk with him: my adoration of him is animated, my presumption and self-confidence are checked, my filial fear is awakened, my gratitude for undeserved favours becomes strong and ardent. I now see, that every creature, in comparison with God, is "less than nothing and vanity:" the mysteries of redemption,—of redemption from impotence, from sin and slavery, I now receive with redoubled thankfulness and exultation: now more than ever is the conviction strengthened, that a life of faith, hope, and love, a life of prayer, devotion, and diligence, is the only rational and wise life. Most true it is that barren subtleties are chilling to piety, but primary truths shine upon the heart like the glorious sun, and cherish the heavenly guest who dwells in it as in the temple of the living God.

§ 29. There are some quotations from the

Fathers brought forward by the Bishop, in order to put Calvinism out of countenance, respecting *grace and divine agency*, which, when fairly examined, are very friendly to our cause. His Lordship thought (else, why should he produce it?) that the following insulated passage out of IRENÆUS is calculated to refute us: '"He hath 'made manifest that *we ought* with our calling 'to be adorned also with the *works of justice*, 'that the Spirit of God may rest upon us."'* Now this we consider as a sound, plain, practical truth. If we neglect to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God," what right have we to expect that the Spirit of God will rest upon us? Again, his Lordship might suppose the following passage from HILARY a victorious one against us: '"But perhaps some 'one, through this religious modesty of the 'prophet, will dare to say thus impiously; If, 'says he, all things are from God, then human 'ignorance *is free from blame*, because it can 'obtain nothing but what it receives, as given 'by God. And in the first place this is an '*impious sentiment*, that a person should think 'he *does not obtain* those things which belong 'to believers, *because he is not indulged with them* '*by God*. But the prophet has removed all 'occasion of this impious excuse. For, first,

* Refut. p. 303.

'when a person *prays* he has performed a *duty* 'suitable to his weakness; then he has con-'nected the exertions of human devotion with 'the gifts of God. For when he says, 'Teach 'me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes,' he shews, 'by the humility of his prayer, what belongs to 'God. But when he subjoined, 'and I shall 'keep it unto the end,' he declared the *duty* of 'his devotion. And in other things also he has 'bound both together by a mutual connexion, 'when he requested to be led into the path, and 'when he himself wished for it. For he placed 'with honour those things first which are from 'God, and then he added those things which 'are of man, with a confession of humility and '*duty*. He prays therefore God to give. The '*beginning* therefore [in point of *duty*] is from '*ourselves*, when we *pray* that the gift may be 'from him: then, because it is his gift *in conse-'quence* of our *beginning* [as an act of duty] it 'is *again* our act that it is sought, and obtained, 'and that it continues."'*

§ 30. These remarks of HILARY's discover much good sense, as directed against a supine and impious objector. It was a doctrine well-known and acknowledged in his day, that grace was sovereign, or at God's peculiar disposal; hence

* Refut. p. 360.

the objection,—and the answer is not only ingenious but solid, when taken in the sense intended. The substance of it is clearly this, That no one has a right to complain of partiality in the divine distribution of grace, or to expect any bestowment of it, while he neglects a plain duty. This, on our part, is the "beginning;" here lies the order of obligation; and to deny it, as the objector did, is "impious." Has he a right to complain, or has he any ground of excuse, who will not begin to act the part of duty, because he is not first indulged with special favours? The supposition is a virtual denial of the whole system of moral obligation. It is with arguments similar to those of HILARY that Calvinists reply to impious cavillers. "Duty is ours," and especially the duty of prayer, but the gracious answer is from the Lord. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." He that "restraineth prayer before God," forsaketh his own profit, and foregoes all rational expectation of blessings from him at whose disposal they are. But though we are bound in duty to begin, God is under no obligation. He can "begin" when he pleases, in conferring favours, without soliciting our permission. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." It is our duty undoubtedly to begin choosing him; but he has the prerogative of a sovereign Benefactor to choose

whom and when he pleases; and to bestow favours at a time and in a degree directed by unerring wisdom.

§ 31. The foregoing sentiment is further explained by the same author: '"Human weakness 'is incompetent to obtain any thing of itself; and 'this only is *the duty of its nature*, that it should 'be *willing to begin* to form itself into the family 'of God. It belongs to the mercy of God to 'assist those who are willing, to confirm those 'who begin, to receive those who come. But 'the *beginning* [in point of obligation] is from 'ourselves, that he may perfect it."'* The point in question with HILARY was, What is "the the duty of our nature?" Is it to neglect, to delay, to stand cavilling with our Maker, our Benefactor, our equitable Ruler, and final Judge; or to *begin* to seek his favour in the discharge of incumbent duty? In similar circumstances, the Calvinists would answer as he did. It would be easy to multiply passages to the same import, were it necessary; but these may be sufficient, as fair specimens, to shew the real meaning of the authors when they speak in some connexions, of the "beginning" being from "ourselves," and which his Lordship too hastily supposed to be adverse to our sentiments. Allowing that a

* Refut. p. 362.

Calvinist might sometimes say, God begins, and we follow; or, the true Christian works *from* life received; still there is no *real* inconsistency, because they do not mean the same kind of beginning. Beside, the modes of expression are directed against opposite erroneous extremes. The Fathers opposed the grossest *fatalism* among the philosophers and heretics; and the Calvinists have had but too much reason to check another heretical pravity, sprung from the Pelagian school, which exalts human self-sufficiency to the throne of the Most High.

§ 32. Some quotations are adduced by the Bishop respecting *faith* which have a verbal aspect of opposition,—but nothing more. Thus, for example, IRENÆUS: '"God has preserved to 'man a will *free*, and *in his own power*, not only 'in works, but also in *faith*, saying, 'According 'to your faith, be it unto you;' shewing 'that *the faith of man is his own*, because he 'has his own will. And again, 'All things are 'possible to him that believeth:' 'And, 'Go 'thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it 'done unto thee.' And all such expressions 'shew that *man is in his own power* with respect 'to faith. And on this account, 'he who be-'lieveth in him hath eternal life: but he who doth 'not believe the Son, hath not eternal life, but 'the wrath of God shall remain upon him.' In

'the same manner, God both shewing his own 'goodness, and *signifying that man is in his 'own free-will and power*, (sui arbitrii, ac suæ 'potestatis nominem significans) said to Jeru-'salem, "How often would I have gathered thy 'children together, even as a hen gathereth her 'chickens under her wings, but ye would not! 'wherefore your house shall be left desolate."' * Here IRENÆUS is professedly opposing those heretics who pleaded for a fatal necessity and force, to the exclusion of judgment and will. They held that some are good and others evil, from *this kind* of necessity, while their own election or choice was out of the question. The Father therefore, very properly, asserts that man is a free agent, even in the exercise of faith. On this, his annotator justly observes that *faith* is taken by divines in a two-fold sense; for it may be considered as either acquired by hearing the word of God, or as an infused principle.† To argue therefore from the one acceptation to the other, is not conclusive. When we maintain

* Refut. p. 307.

† Fidem duplicem constituunt Theologi, priorem quæ electione vel auditione verbi Dei acquiritur, hinc *acquisitam* vocant. Hanc CYRILLUS Ierosol. *dogmaticam*, Apostolus fidem *ex auditu* nominat.—Posteriorem fidem quòd a Deo penitus infundatur mentibus nostris, *infusam* appellant. Hanc donum Dei esse, compluribus scriptis ostendunt AUGUSTINUS et CYRILLUS. IRENÆI opera, p. 419. Ed. 1639.

that faith is the gift of God, we do not deny, but firmly hold, that man, as a free-agent, is bound in duty to "believe with the heart unto righteousness."

§ 33. In the same manner we accord with these expressions of CYRIL: '"Those therefore 'who receive this spiritual and saving seal, *have* '*need also of their own free choice;* for as a 'writing-pen, or a weapon, has need of one to 'act with it, so *grace also has need of those who* '*believe.*"'* In short, what we maintain, in exact conformity with CYRIL, is this, that faith as an infused habit, is entirely from God, and his free gift; but as an exercised grace, is our own free choice. So that, in the latter acceptation, "*grace* also has need of those who *believe*,"—for how can any one become a *believer* without his own will embracing the divine record or testimony?

§ 34. To the same purport are the following words of CHYSOSTOM: '"But perhaps some one 'will say, if every thing which the Father gives 'comes to you, and to those whom he shall 'draw, and no one can come to you, unless it 'be given him from above, they are *free from* '*all blame and accusation*, to whom the Father

* Refut. p. 348.

'does not give it. This is a mere fallacy and 'pretence. For *we have need of our own free will.* 'For *to be taught*, and *to believe*, depend upon our 'own will. But by the expression, 'that which 'the Father giveth me' he only means, that *to* '*believe* in me is no common thing, but requiring 'revelation from above, and *a mind which piously* '*receives that revelation.*'"* The very connexion shews that CHRYSOSTOM combats the fallacious pretence of those who would fain excuse themselves from the exercise of faith, because the orthodox maintained, as we do, that, in one sense, faith is the gift of God. If we would *believe*, we must hear the word, and be willing to be taught; and if we would "believe to the saving of the soul," it behoves us to cultivate "a mind which piously receives that revelation" which God has graciously afforded us.

§ 35. The Bishop of Lincoln seems to regard the following quotation from GREGORY of Nazianzum, as a formidable contrast to our sentiments on *regeneration:* But we cannot allow that the real meaning of the passage is any other than what we acknowledge to be scriptural, though the mere phraseology may be considered as ambiguous. '"This is the grace

* Refut. p. 191.

'[the exhibited favour] and power [i. e. *obliga-*
'*tion*] of baptism; not bringing a deluge upon
'the world, [i. e. this is not its *design*] as
'formerly, but purifying every one from his
'sins, and entirely removing the obstructions
'or spots which are caused by wickedness.
'[This is what it sacramentally *exhibits*, and
'this is the *obligation* under which it lays us.]
'To speak in few words, we are to consider the
'power [i. e. the *obliging* force] of baptism as a
'contract with God for a second [i. e. a holy]
'life, and a more pure conversation—*there being*
'*no second regeneration.*" '* It seems to me plain, that GREGORY does not treat of Baptism as the mere act of washing, or of any effect of it *ex opere operato*, but of what it sacramentally exhibits, and what is the obligation resulting from it; baptized Christians being considered by him, by virtue of "a contract with God," as under an explicit obligation to live a life becoming their profession, "and a more pure conversation" than they were before accustomed to. And as to the concluding clause, "there being no second regeneration," we admit it as a truth, whether the term "regeneration" be taken for the sign, or for the thing signified; that is, for baptism, or for a spiritual renovation: As there is no divinely instituted

* Refut. p. 374.

repetition of the sign, so neither is there a second birth of the Holy Spirit: there being in the appointment of God, but "one baptism," either sacramentally or spiritually considered. At the same time we profess, that millions beside Simon Magus *may* have been baptized with water, without being baptized with the Holy Spirit: and consequently, that baptismal regeneration and spiritual regeneration ought not to be confounded. For my own part, I would not be solicitous about the *term* "regeneration," provided the idea, or scriptural truth which we mean to express by it, be allowed. We are not so fond of controversy as to contend about verbal minutiæ—to keep up "a strife of words."

§ 36. Closely related to the last quotation is the following from JUSTIN MARTYR, with which, if it be taken as it was evidently intended by this Father, we fully accord. The difference is merely verbal. '"Whoever are persuaded and 'believe, that those things which are taught 'and said by us are true, and engage that they 'can live agreeably to them, are directed to fast 'and pray, and entreat from God forgiveness of 'their former sins, we praying and fasting with 'them. Afterwards they are conducted by us 'to a place where there is water, and *they are* '*regenerated* [i. e. baptized with water, which 'is the sacramental sign of a *new birth* unto

'righteousness], according to the same mode of 'regeneration [baptism] by which we ourselves 'were regenerated [baptized], for they are then 'washed with water in the name of the Father 'of the universe and the Lord God, and of our 'Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. 'For Christ said, "Except ye be born again, ye 'shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."'* On this passage his Lordship remarks, that it 'decidedly proves what was the *doctrine* of re-'generation in the primitive church of Christ.' With due deference to his Lordship, I must also remark upon it, that this passage only proves how JUSTIN used the *term* "regeneration" in this connexion, but not the doctrine. It is indeed agreeable to our Lord's words, that without baptism there is no entering into his kingdom, the church; and it is equally true, that no one shall enter into the spirituality of that kingdom without being "born of the Spirit."

§ 37. It is worthy of remark that JUSTIN does not confine the term "regeneration," or being "born again," to the ordinance of baptism. In his Dialogue with TRYPHO the Jew, he observes: "Jesus commanded us to love even our enemies: which Isaiah also declared in many words, (εν οις και το μυστηριον παλιν της γενεσεως)

* Refut. p. 297.

in which [words of Isaiah] is the mystery of our *regeneration*, and in like manner [the regeneration] of all those who expected Christ's appearance in the [celestial] Jerusalem, and who had laboured to please him by their works."* The words to which he alludes are in Isa. lvi. 5 — 11. Neither in Isaiah nor in JUSTIN is there any allusion to baptism, but a totally different kind of regeneration, even a spiritual renovation; a regeneration of which they were partakers who had gone to heaven, from age to age, prior to Christ's ascension.

§ 38. There is one passage in JEROME which, at first sight, seems to militate against our view of *election*, but in truth, when properly understood, accords with our sentiments. ' " Paul a ' servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, ' *according to the faith* of God's *elect*;' that is, ' of those who are not only called, but elected. ' There is also a great difference in the elect ' themselves, *according to the variety of works*, ' sentiments, and words. Nor does it follow ' that the elect of God either *possesses faith ac-* ' *cording* [in equal proportion] *to election*, or has ' the *knowledge of truth according to* [proportioned ' to the reality of] *faith*. Whence our Saviour ' said to the Jews *who had believed* in him, ' If

* JUSTINI Opera, p. 312. Ed. 1686.

'ye continue in my word, ye shall know the 'truth, and the truth shall make you free.' The 'evangelist testifies that he spoke these things 'to *those who did believe*, but *who did not know* 'the truth, which they would have in their 'power to obtain, if they would remain in his 'word, and being made free, they would cease 'to be slaves." '* The whole drift of this passage clearly shews, that what JEROME intended to assert, was simply this,—that among God's elect there are different degrees of faith, and among believers there are different degrees of knowledge. Is there any Calvinist to be found who would dispute this?

§ 39. I am unwilling to prosecute this exposure of his Lordship's misconceptions farther lest my readers should begin to complain of weariness. At the same time they must bear in mind that the catalogue is by no means complete. It would be easy, indeed, to produce several scores of pages out of those very quotations, which the Bishop has triumphantly brought forward as 'opposed to the tenets of Calvinism,' which, if fairly examined, have no real opposition to our sentiments, and which derive even the semblance of opposition from a peculiarity of expressions and phrases familiar

* Refut. p. 407.

to them, but seldom used by us,—expressions and phrases which may be very generally accounted for, by a careful consideration either of the prevailing errors of their day, which they laboured to subvert, or of the truths which they were solicitous to establish.

SECT. IV.

Quotations from the Fathers that are Unscriptural both in Language and Sentiment.

1. Remarks on the Christian Fathers as *Teachers*.

§ 2. Quotations respecting Man as the *cause* and preserver of his own *goodness*, from IRENÆUS. § 3. From ORIGEN. § 4. From ATHANASIUS. § 5, 6. From CHRYSOSTOM. § 7. From CLEMENT of Alexandria. § 8. On the cause of *difference* and variety in creatures, from ORIGEN.

§ 9. On Free-Will *ceasing* with this life, from HILARY.

§ 10. On *redemption*, from HILARY.

§ 11. On the *permission* of *good*, from JEROME.

§ 12—14. On God being *good* not of *necessity*, from JEROME.

§ 15. On Free-Will being *weakened* by grace, from JEROME.

§ 16, 17. On no one being *born without Christ*, from JEROME.

§ 18, 19. On a *middle* life and a *middle sentence*, from JEROME.

§ 20—25. On the doctrine of *Election*, from JEROME.

§ 26—28.—On *Baptism* conferring *grace*, from CHRYSOSTOM.

§ 29. On graces *given* having no crowns, from CHRYSOSTOM.

§ 30—33. On grace *not preventing* our choice, from CHRYSOSTOM and THEODORET.

§ 1. THE Christian Fathers did not propose themselves to the church of Christ as infallible teachers; in this respect, they occupied the same rank with Christian ministers in subsequent ages, those of the present day not excepted. They professed only to explain the sacred oracles, and their explanations have no claim of exemption from being brought to the test of liberal criticism and sound principles. There was a time, indeed, when the *ipse dixit* of a canonized

Father, in the church, went as far in deciding a point of controversy, as an appeal to any sentence of the Stagyrite went to set at rest a knotty point of debate in the Aristotelian school. But by consistent Protestants those days are viewed with an eye of pity, as days of darkness and superstition. What is truly scriptural, devotional, and rational, we should thankfully receive and improve; but what we may find in them of an opposite character, is by no means to be imposed upon us under the patronage of sainted or pompous titles, or by the *argumentum ad verecundiam.* Many of them were learned and pious, faithful and zealous; and these are our helpers, though not our masters. But many of them (and occasionally the very best) were fanciful rather than judicious interpreters of scripture; and in such instances therefore are not our guides to truth, but are rather beacons to warn us of our danger. To examine their defects is not a pleasant task; but the Bishop of Lincoln, by giving them so much publicity, has rendered some notice of them unavoidable, in a professed examination of his work.

§ 2. Some of these Fathers, after the most ample allowance made for their circumstances, speak of man as the *cause of his own goodness and preservation*, in an unjustifiable strain. Thus, for example, IRENÆUS: '"But man, being

'endowed with reason, and in this respect like 'to God, being made free in his will, and 'having power over himself, *is himself the cause* 'that sometimes he becomes *wheat*, and some-'times *chaff*.'"* It may be said, he contended against heretical fatalists, who ascribed to every one a fixed and unchangeable nature. Very true; but this is like opposing one heresy by advancing another. Man indeed has free-will, and "is himself the cause" of the *sinfulness* of his actions, whereby he becomes "chaff." But it is not true, that, in like manner, he "is himself the cause" of the *goodness* of his actions, whereby he becomes "wheat." The error consists in ascribing opposite effects to the same cause; and in confounding free-will with the proper cause of moral good or evil. If he meant to convey this idea—that our good and bad actions may be traced to free-will—we grant it: but we cannot admit this as the ultimate "cause" of either, much less of good actions. We allow further, that the *immediate* cause of our actions, whether good or bad, is *in* ourselves, as either an efficient or a deficient principle; but then this is very different from saying that man "is himself the *cause* of his becoming wheat." The great fallacy consists in making man *as much* the cause of his good as of his evil: while the holy scrip-

* Refut. p. 302.

tures very explicitly ascribe all our good to God, and all our evil to ourselves.* The same error is involved in the following sentence, by the same author: '"But he has placed the 'power of choice in man, as also in angels, (for 'angels are endowed with reason,) that those 'who should obey might justly possess *good*, '*given* indeed by God, but *preserved* by them-'selves."'† We think with the scriptures of truth, that God is our preserver; and that we are "preserved" or "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The Lord is our keeper, our shepherd, our strong tower. If it had been said, it is our *duty* to preserve ourselves from the defilements of sin, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and in the love of God, it might be received as a scriptural truth. This, however, is widely different from asserting that the good received by men is "preserved by themselves."

§ 3. It appears to me that the following sentence in ORIGEN is not unexceptionable: '"But because these vessels of which we speak, are to 'be considered as rational, and endowed with 'free-will, every one is made a vessel of honour, 'or a vessel of dishonour, not by accident or

* See James i. 14—18. 2 Cor. iv. 6—and 1 Cor. iv. 7.

† Refut. p. 301.

'chance; but *he who makes himself such, that* '*he deserves to be chosen*, is made a chosen vessel 'or a vessel of honour."'* The author's design, I acknowledge, is to rouse the indolent sensualist, lurking under the covert of fatalism: but it seems to me that no design or occasion whatever can justify this mode of expression,—"he who *makes himself* such, that he deserves to be chosen." It appears equally offensive to Christian humility and philosophic truth. How contrary in language and sentiment from the strong affirmation implied in St. Paul's interrogations: "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"† Do not these questions clearly imply, that GOD makes one to differ from another in what is good and valuable; and that no one has any excellence but from him? But on the statement of *Origen*, a Christian may say, "I made *myself* to differ, I distinguished *myself* from all the undeserving ones." What though your will was active in worthy deeds, was it not the Spirit of God who gave you both the will itself and its goodness? "Be not high-minded—quench not the Spirit." Give unto God what belongs to him; "will a man rob God?"

§ 4. Equally reprehensible, because unscrip-

* Refut. p. 339. † 1 Cor. vi. 7.

tural, is the following assertion of ATHANASIUS: ' " For the knowledge, and accurate compre- ' hension of the way of truth, *we have need of* ' *nothing but ourselves.*" '* How different from the language, and how opposite to the meaning of an inspired apostle is this! " Not that we are *sufficient of ourselves* to think any thing *as of ourselves;* but our sufficiency is *of God.*"† " But by the *grace of God* I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the *grace of God* which was with me."‡ Had Paul been asked, Have you " need of nothing but yourself,"—would he not have contradicted ATHANASIUS in his presumptuous assertion? Had he been asked, how came you to obtain "the knowledge, and accurate comprehension of the way of truth," would he not have replied, " God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ?"‖ While the church of Rome blindly followed the sayings of the Fathers, it is no wonder, considering the selfish propensities of our depraved hearts, that they should err so widely from the truth, and blunder on the doctrine of human merit.

* Refut. p. 344. † 2 Cor. iii. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 10. ‖ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

§ 5. Of the same selfish and censurable tendency is the following remark of CHRYSOSTOM: '"And the very circumstance, that this Patri-'arch [Abraham], who lived *before the time of* '*grace*, and before the law, reached such a 'measure of virtue *by himself*, and *from his* '*natural knowledge*, is sufficient to deprive us 'of all excuse. But perhaps some one will say, 'this man enjoyed great favour from God, and 'that the God of the universe shewed great 'regard for him. This I acknowledge; but 'unless he had first shewn things *from himself*, 'he would not have enjoyed things from God."'* What is this but the Popish doctrine of merit in its most exceptionable form? This eloquent Father evidently confounds things that differ. He supposed that Abraham, because he lived "before the time of grace," that is, the time of the gospel, had not gospel promises, and was destitute of internal grace, and that his virtue was "from his natural knowledge." Now this is clearly contradicted by the whole strain of scripture: "What shall we say then that Abraham our Father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God."† He had to glory before men, that his faith was operative; and his acts of faith and obedience

* Refut. p. 464. † Rom. iv. 1, 2.

were justified and highly approved of God: the *act* of believing was his own, but the principle of faith was of God's gracious operation. And his knowledge was not "natural" but gracious; not less so than that of Paul, or any other Christian *after* "the time of grace." Internal religion is derived from the same divine source at all times; and the difference, as to "grace," in the manifestative use of the term which he employs, is only in degrees—not in kind.

§ 6. There are other passages in the same writer that must sound very gratingly in the ears of those who properly know themselves. "For if he be not a respecter of persons, as he 'certainly is not, but, looking to the intention, 'co-operates with us in our right actions, it is 'evident that *we are ourselves the cause of our 'obtaining his favour.*'"* This is no less false reasoning than false divinity. The conclusion is illogical, that, unless "we are ourselves the cause of our obtaining his favour," God must be "a respecter of persons." For what is the proper and scriptural notion of God acting as a respecter of persons? Is it not to shew partiality to one rather than another in his *judicial* character? But this he does not; for he will judge every one according as his work shall

* Refut. p. 199.

have been. On the supposition that he is bound as a sovereign *benefactor* to shew compassion and kindness, only according as we do things worthy of them, who could be saved? This Father, therefore, confounds these characters of God, and the true state of mankind; confounds human *ability* with human *obligation;* what a man actually does with what he ought to do. Even supposing man to perform what he ought, in order to obtain any divine favour proposed to him, still it is a sentiment replete with self-ignorance, ingratitude, and corrupt theology, to ascribe this to *himself* as the "cause" of obtaining it.

§ 7. Not less unjustifiable is the following declaration of CLEMENT of Alexandria. '"It 'is in your power, if you will, to *purchase* this 'precious salvation, with your *own treasure,* 'charity and faith, which is the *just price of* '*life.* This price God willingly accepts."'* Because God *requires* "charity and faith," in order to salvation, is it not to the last degree preposterous to call this "our own treature," with which we "purchase this precious salvation!" Some allowance may be made for a rhetorical mode of speaking; but rhetoric is ill employed when it is made to trample on

* Refut. p. 311.

theological truth. It would be difficult to find any thing among the most injudicious declaimers of the present day, however illiterate, of a tendency more injurious to divine truth, or more dangerous to the souls of men, than this passage and the preceding quotations. To produce expressions and sentiments like these, as the genuine divinity of the ancient Fathers, with a view to "refute" Calvinism, is nothing but to sink their reputation, and to destroy their influence in the public esteem.

§ 8. Nearly related to the last quotations is the following passage out of ORIGEN: '"The '*cause of the difference and variety in every* '*individual creature* is shewn to *arise from their* '*own motions* being more ardent or more slow, 'towards virtue or toward wickedness, and not 'from the *inequality of him who dispenses.*"'* This Father has been often, and very justly, charged with corrupting Christianity by philosophy. But had his philosophy been good, he would not have corrupted but illustrated that religion which is founded in the highest wisdom, and which emanates from eternal truth. It is a philosophy or a science "falsely so called," that corrupts Christianity: and we may truly retort upon ORIGEN the counterpart of what

* Refut. p. 322

has been said of him; that by religion, imperfectly understood in many points, he corrupted philosophy. Let us hear the language of St. Paul regarding "the cause of the difference and variety" among some rational creatures. "Now there are *diversities of gifts*, but the same Spirit. And there are *differences of administrations*, but the same Lord. And there are *diversities of operations*, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all.—For to *one* is given by the Spirit the word of *wisdom;* to another the word of *knowledge* by the same Spirit; to *another* faith by the same Spirit; to *another* the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to *another* the working of miracles; to *another* prophecy; to *another* discerning of Spirits; to *another* divers kinds of tongues; to *another* the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, *dividing to every one severally as he will.*" * How different is this doctrine from ORIGEN's false philosophy, that there is "no inequality of him who dispenses," and that 'the *cause* of the difference and variety in every individual creature *arises from their own motions.*" Though his assertion is universal, "every individual *creature*," and therefore philosophically absurd, I will admit that he means "every *rational* creature," and

* 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.

still the theology of the sentiment is both antiscriptural and in a high degree unreasonable. "Who *made thee to differ* from another," for the better? Does it "*arise* from thy own motion, as more ardent toward virtue?" In human characters, doubtless, there are differences and varieties, and some are more ardent, others more slow: but what is their *cause?* ORIGEN's answer, as above, can satisfy neither the scriptural divine, nor the sound philosopher.

§ 9. Another absurd sentiment we find among these quotations, is, that *Free-will ceases with this life.* Thus HILARY: "'For when we 'depart out of this life, we depart at the same 'time *from the right of will.*—For when the 'liberty *of the will ceases*, the *effect* also of the 'will, *if there be any*, will *cease.*'"* I am willing to make every allowance that real candour can demand; and will suppose therefore that HILARY intended to convey the sentiment of *probation* being confined to this life. Even then, however, the statement is crude, and calculated to make false impressions on the mind. But if he meant what his words naturally express, the notion is alike unscriptural and absurd. Are not the celestial inhabitants free and voluntary agents? "Thy will be done on earth, as it is

* Refut. p. 358.

in heaven." "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth—heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." * If these services in heaven are not voluntary, not the effects of free-will, it will be rather difficult to prove, I imagine, that there are any on earth of that description.

§ 10. Among these quotations we also learn that *all mankind are redeemed from all their iniquities.* Thus the last mentioned author: ' " He is good in whom we hope; and hope is ' to be placed in him, because he is merciful, ' because there is abundant redemption with ' him, for he redeemed *all mankind from all their* ' *iniquities.*" '† This is to extend the notion of universal redemption far beyond that of the advocates for universal restoration! "Redemit ab omnibus iniquitatibus suis universos!" Surely this is a circle to which his Lordship's ideas of redemption, however universal, cannot expand themselves. Had HILARY said that the *price* of redemption is adequate for all mankind, we could listen to him; but what scriptural sentiment, what principle of common reason, or what view of human society, can justify the

* Rev. v. 13. † Refut. p. 363.

representation as here quoted. What truth can be more certain, even to ocular demonstration, than the reverse of HILARY's assertion, that all mankind are *not* redeemed from all their iniquities: and that, on the contrary, a large proportion of mankind are willing captives to them.

§ 11. In these extracts from the Fathers we are told, that *God is not the cause but the permitter of good.* Thus JEROME teaches: '"Whether, therefore, *with respect to good* or 'evil, *neither God*, nor the devil is the *cause* of 'it, because our persuasion cometh not of him 'that calleth, but from *ourselves*, who either 'consent, or do not consent to him that calleth '—he himself *permitted* us to will that which is good."'* It would, indeed, have been a great hardship imposed upon any creature, when inclined "to will that which is good," not to have been "permitted" to do so. But what exalted views of self-sufficiency, and what degrading views of divine operations does this representation exhibit! One might be induced to think, from JEROME's language, that "to will that which is good," is a matter of course, if only "permitted." JEROME was not destitute of learning or genius; but he was lamentably

* Refut. pp. 404, 407.

deficient in just principles: on which account it is that he and many of the Fathers, are so often confused, erroneous, and self-contradictory. The permission of evil, conveys an idea very conceivable, but the permission of good, from the fountain and author of all good, is an idea which has no archetype in the nature of things.

§ 12. The same author informs us that *God is good*, but *not of necessity*. ' " For if God *be* ' *good* voluntarily, and *not of necessity*, he ought ' in making man, to make him after his own ' image and likeness, that is, so that he too ' might *be good* voluntarily, and *not of necessity*. ' —If he had been made such as to *do good* not ' by will, but by necessity, he would not have ' been like God, *who is therefore good because he* ' *wills it*, not because he is forced.—But when ' they say that he ought to be made such, that ' he *could not admit of wickedness*, while they ' impose upon him the necessity of good, they ' desire that he should *not be like God*." '* The reader might very justly be surprised that a Christian Bishop in the nineteenth century, surrounded with so many improvements in science, should admit into a controversial publication such trash as this, under the specious title of " Quotations from the Fathers, opposed to the

* Refut. p. 408.

tenets of Calvinism." It is no wonder that heresies sprang up so plentifully amidst attempts like these to vindicate the catholic doctrine: attempts which could have no other effect than to infuse additional strength into the arm of the assailant, and to render his heart impenetrable to the truth.

§ 13. In the first place, JEROME takes it for granted, in defiance of the strongest evidence, that '*voluntary*' and '*necessary*' cannot co-exist in God. But is it not a first principle of truth, that the existence of God is of eternal and absolute necessity; and is it not equally true, that his will or *voluntariness* to exist, is inseparable from his existence? Again, is not goodness an essential perfection of Deity, and therefore 'necessary;' yet is it clearly impossible for the divine goodness not to be voluntary. In the second place, to suppose that God is "good *because* he wills it," is to make an essential perfection the effect of will; which is not less absurd, than to suppose that his existence is the effect of his will! If it be said that JEROME intended that the communication of good *ad extra* was voluntary and not necessary; I reply, that in that case his account involves two improprieties. The first of these is a most inexcusable confounding of terms, the confounding of *being* good and *doing* good. When the Psalmist says,

"Thou art good, and doest good,"* he expresses very different ideas. And when he says "Good and upright is the Lord,"† he conveys a very different sentiment from another expressed in these words, "Truly God is good *to Israel*."‡ The other part of the impropriety affects his argument; which is founded on a similarity of "good" in God and in man. Whereas what God claims for man as the ground of likeness is "doing good," or virtuous conduct, and not the communication of his goodness to others. And if the author meant by "being good" the same thing as "doing good" voluntarily, and not of necessity, is not such language adapted to perplex rather than convince, to betray a cause rather than defend it?

§ 14. In the next place, JEROME supposes, most preposterously, that man would "not be like God," if he were so made that "he could not admit of wickedness," that is, of doing evil! But is not this one essential thing wherein it is absolutely impossible for God to be like man? Man goeth astray speaking lies; but "it is *impossible* for God to lie." It is God's glory that "he cannot deny himself. It is as impossible for God to do wrong, or any thing but what is good, as it is for him to change his infinitely

* Psa. cxix. 68. † Ib. xxv. 8. ‡ Ib lxxiii. 1.

perfect holy nature. If it be objected that God could, if he pleased, do what is morally evil, but he will not; we are intitled to ask what evidence there is for saying that "he will not?" It will certainly never satisfy any one capable of a moment's reflection to be told that he never *has* done wrong, or that he declares in his word that he never *will* do so. On the other hand, in God's indefectible nature, or his absolutely invariable perfections of rectitude and holiness, we have a solid basis of trust and confidence, of faith, hope and love. But what then becomes of JEROME's argument against the Heretics? that man must needs be free to wickedness, otherwise he would not be like God?

§ 15. This Father advances another unfounded notion, that *free-will is weakened by grace.* '"But where there is *mercy and grace, free-will* '*in part ceases;* which extends only so far, that 'we will and desire, and assent to what we think 'right."'* Here the province of free-will is professedly and not improperly drawn; it "extends *only so far*, that we will and desire, and assent to what *we think right.*" But what conceivable tendency is there in "mercy and grace" to make free-will "cease in part?" Had JEROME properly understood, or duly considered, the nature of the will and its freedom, on the

* Refut. p. 411.

one hand, and of grace in its operations, on the other, he never could have imagined that mercy and grace can have any influence to diminish, to weaken, or any way to counteract our "assent to what we think right." If a degree of grace in man makes his free-will cease in part, one might naturally conclude that the perfection of mercy and grace in God would make his free-will to cease entirely! But grace in man is of an enlightening as well as of a holy nature; how then can it interfere with our willing what we think right? He who properly considers the subject may perceive, that a graceless person is free to choose what he *thinks* right, at the moment of choosing; and that a gracious person, in proportion as his gracious principle is operative, chooses not only what he thinks right (which is essential to freedom,) but also what really *is* right; so that his thinking and the reality coincide. JEROME's doctrine is no less absurd than the supposition, where there is *light*, our freedom of movement in part ceases!

§ 16. We are again told by this grave authority that *no one is born without Christ*. Thus he states: '"It is clear that all men have a natural 'knowledge of God, and that *no one is born* 'without Christ, and without having in himself '*the seeds* of wisdom, and of justice, and of the

'other virtues."'* Were a modern writer to express himself in this manner, he would be charged, and not unjustly, with mysticism, and perhaps with heretical enthusiasm: and with the utmost deference to the learned person who has adduced the passage, I would submit that antiquity has no prerogative to change the nature of truth. The first clause of the sentence is sufficiently vague; but as it admits of a construction consistent with truth, I take no further notice of it. But what can the author mean by "no one is born without Christ?" Surely not that the Messiah's existence continues; nor probably that his mediation is co-existent with the births of all mankind. From the connexion it should seem, he means that no one is born without some kind of interest in Christ. What kind of interest however, can it be? Is there in fact, any conceivable interest in Christ which is not founded in *union* to him? Union by *faith* is out of the question: and his being united to our *nature* by his incarnation, could be no more a ground of interest to infants than to adult profligates; the nature of each individual being alike included in the incarnation. He must therefore mean a *spiritual* union in virtue of which every one born has an interest in Christ. But is there a particle of evidence for this opinion? Besides,

* Refut. p. 112.

allow it and you prove too much even for his Lordship, because in that case every one would be justified before he was baptized: it being, is manifest from the whole tenor of the New Testament, that he who is thus united to Christ is in a *justified* state. "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." "He that hath the Son hath life."

§ 17. Again, what "seeds of wisdom, and of justice, and of the other virtues," without which "no one is born," can there conceivably exist in any human being, except as the effect of a vital, spiritual union? Nay, the notion abetted makes the second birth prior to the first, since, according to him, "no one is born without Christ;" or at all events the first and second births are coeval. Now as it is contended by his Lordship that baptism is the new birth, I confess I do not perceive how he can honestly disown the fair inference, that "no one is born without baptism!" Moreover, as there is "no second regeneration," why should any adult persons be baptized, and why should Christ say, "Ye must be born again?" On this author's principle, it might have been replied, We were not born without Christ, we had from the first breath a new nature, "the seeds of wisdom, and of justice, and of the other virtues;" and if the design of baptism be to

"confer" or to "convey" these blessings, it comes too late: and as our natural birth cannot be repeated, so neither can our spiritual birth. In brief, this Father's notion must be considered as a groundless enthusiastic hypothesis, until it be made to appear that "no one is born without the indwelling spirit of Christ," —and in proportion as any one succeeds in the attempt, consequences will follow not a little disastrous to his Lordship's doctrine of baptism and regeneration.

§ 18. The Bishop attacks Calvinism, by an insulated quotation from the same author, concerning a *middle life* and a *middle sentence.* As the modern Calvinists are so prone to run into extremes, possibly the insertion of the following passage was intended to counteract their eccentric propensities. '"It is not to be feared but 'that there may be a certain *middle life* between 'virtue and sin, and that the sentence of the 'Judge may be *in the middle*, between reward 'and punishment."'* Now as I am at a loss to know against what Calvinistic extremes this middle doctrine is intended to be operative, unfortunately I cannot profit by it. Let us, however, re-examine the passage; for it was neither written by JEROME, I presume, nor

* Refut. p. 415.

quoted by his Lordship without some design. "It is not to be *feared*;" from this we may infer that it was intended by the author as a consolatory doctrine, and calculated to cheer a disconsolate parent on the loss of an infant child, especially if death seized it unbaptized. This, however, will not do; for the author believed, as we have seen, that "no one is born without Christ, and without the seeds of every virtue:" and clearly he who has the seeds of every virtue has a virtuous nature, and he who has Christ is free from sin and condemnation. This middle doctrine therefore cannot apply to new-born infants: nor is it to be supposed that the ascribed benefit is withdrawn until forfeited by some actual transgression, as this would turn the scales, and their life would no longer be a *medium* "between virtue and sin."

§ 19. We have sometimes heard it asserted by a certain class of preachers, that the virtues and charities of men are a *counterbalance* to their sins and failings: that, for instance, when the scripture says "Thou art weighed in the balances," the meaning is, that thy sins are put in one scale, and thy virtues in the other. Now it may so happen that the weights are equal, without any preponderance one way or other. Who can tell but this may be the "middle life" intended by JEROME, which is

to receive from the Judge a "middle sentence" between reward and punishment. But I am apprehensive that this also will not succeed. Because, first, one unpardoned sin is a heavier weight than all the virtues of any man put together in the opposite scale: a conclusion which easily admits of formal proof, but for the truth of which I shall only appeal at present to the proper nature of sin and of human virtue. Again, if the man's transgressions are forgiven, or his sins covered, they are never likely to be put in the scale: what is blotted out is not to be produced: virtues and charities have the whole exclusive sway, — and what becomes of the middle life, and the middle sentence? If we appeal to scripture, instead of human fancies ancient or modern, we may soon learn that there is no medium between being in Christ and out of Christ; between being justified as united to him, or condemned as not united to him; and that there will be no medium at the final judgment between "Come ye blessed," and "depart ye cursed." If indeed there were any force in JEROME's doctrine against the Calvinists, it would go to establish the doctrine of purgatory, a *limbus infantium*, or a *limbus patrum*. The Papists must have felt extreme regret when they found that they could not prevail upon the Protestants to abide by an appeal to the Fathers upon all disputed points.

§ 20. This author is not a little confused when he endeavours to ascertain the scriptural *doctrine of Election.* Of this let the reader judge from the following specimen: ' " What ' then did God choose? For if he gives the ' Holy Spirit to whom he wills, through which ' love works good, how has he chosen to whom ' he gives it? For if it be given *in consequence* ' *of no merit, there is no election;* for *all are* ' *equal before merit;* nor can it be called elec- ' tion, where things are exactly equal. But ' because the Holy Spirit is not given except ' to those who believe, God has not chosen the ' *works* which he himself gives, when he gives ' the Holy Spirit, that we may do good works ' through love; but nevertheless he has chosen ' *faith.*—Therefore God did not in his prescience ' choose the works of any one, which he was ' himself about to give; but he *chose faith in* ' *his prescience;* so that he chose him who he ' foreknew would believe, to whom he might ' give his Holy Spirit; that by good works he ' might also obtain eternal life." '* On this passage I would make a few remarks. And, *first*, if there be no election but in consequence of personal merit, (for no other is in question), how came the apostle Paul to be " a chosen vessel," and arrested in his career of sin, before

* Refut. p. 424.

he had any such merit? Whereas if we view the Redeemer, on the ground of his own merit, acting the part of a surety, rescuing Paul from the power of sin and satan, giving him light and life by the operation of his Spirit, whereby he is convinced of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; and if, moreover, as the effect of this first grace, we view him full of agitation, crying out "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" then fervently praying from this principle of faith for more light and instruction: we behold a plain, consistent, scriptural and rational process. And though the circumstances of this case are extraordinary, there is no reason to conclude that the nature of the divine process, as to causality, is different from other conversions: but even were the case a solitary one, in this respect, it is sufficient to overturn JEROME's maxim, "if the Spirit be given in consequence of no merit (i. e. in the object.) there is no election."

§ 21. I remark, *secondly*, that the ground of his argument, "for all are *equal* before *merit*," is fallacious for want of a distinction of the terms. We grant that "merit" is regarded in all election or choice; but what merit, or whose merit? The scripture tells us that the elect are "chosen in Christ," and what can this import less than *for his sake*, or on the ground of his

merits? He who has the Spirit of Christ, has an interest in him, in his merits, and his federal righteousness, while he who "has not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his." Hence the term "equal" ought to be distinguished. Two persons, one interested and the other not interested in the merits of Christ by a spiritual union, are in this respect not equal, and therefore on JEROME's own maxim, "without merit there is no election," the one may be elected and not the other, without having recourse to *personal* merit by a subsequent act of believing. For, in the nature of things, the union and interest must precede a *living faith*. To suppose that a *dead faith* has *merit* to procure the Holy Spirit, is surely an absurdity too gross to require a refutation.

§ 22. I remark, in the *third* place, that though in regard to "merit" or personal worthiness, the Calvinists consider all men "equal," it does not follow from our principles, that God sees no ground of preference. His understanding is infinite, his wisdom is to us unfathomable. He adapts means to ends, in a manner we are unable to scrutinize; and knows, with unerring precision, how to select out of the same *unmeritorious* lump, materials for vessels of more or of less honour. None are reserved to wrath, but for their abuse of liberty and the powers and

means with which they were favoured; nor are any chosen in Christ without a *divine* reason. He is the author of our natural powers, he supports and invigorates them, he preserves and protracts our lives, and fixes the bounds of our habitations. Taking all into the account, he knows how the choice of one, rather than another, is adapted to suit his plan of wisdom, and to display "the praise of the glory of his grace." But at the same time that distinguishing benevolence reigns, in the distribution of benefits, he is infinitely remote from wronging any man, or doing the smallest injury to the work of his hands.

§ 23. In the *fourth* place, by what logic could JEROME infer that faith is meritorious, while good works are not meritorious? Because, it seems, God "himself *gives works*, when he gives the Holy Spirit, that we may do good works through love." But how does it appear that "works" are the gift of God, while "faith" is not? The scripture says, "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and *that* (και τουτο, i. e. θεου το δωρον, nempe το *credere*, vel *fides*) not of yourselves; it is *the gift of God*,—for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* "For unto you

* Eph. ii. 8. 10.

it is given in the behalf of Christ (*το εις αυτον πιςευειν*) *to believe on him.*"* How decisive the evidence that faith is no less "the gift of God" than good works. The actions, both believing and doing good, are alike ours, but the spiritual as well as natural ability to act, is *from God*, who "worketh in us both to *will* and to *do* of his own good pleasure." Consequently, if it be a good reason that God does not choose works, because he gives works; it follows, from revealed evidence, that he does not choose faith, because he gives faith.

§ 24. "He chose *faith* in his prescience, so that he chose *him whom he foreknew would believe.*" Here is a difficulty. If a man must not have any influence of the Holy Spirit to enable him to believe, lest it should take away the merit of faith, how is he to acquire it, so that it may become a meritorious ground of his election? In the sight of God, and therefore in his prescience, a *dead* faith can have no *merit*, nor can it bring the Holy Spirit into the soul; it must then be a *lively* faith that is chosen. But whence comes this? For supposing, with JEROME, that "no one is born without Christ,"[3] or without "the seeds of faith;" and supposing too that baptism has conveyed to the subject

* Philip. i. 29.

something additional; it is more than probable that these "seeds" have lost their prolific virtue by an indolent, careless, carnal or dissipated life. By his loose or profligate conduct, his baptism, and his interest in Christ is lost. If ever he had a lively faith, these things have brought death upon it. And now it requires a resurrection. On this Father's principle, here is a hopeless case. If the man be left to himself, where is the ground of hope? That he *ought* to believe is certain, because he has a plain testimony from God for that purpose; nay more, that he ought to believe with all his heart, that he may obtain righteousness; but still the difficulty returns, how is he to do *this good work*, "believing with the heart," without being quickened from above? How perplexing the case! If he be assisted to believe, his *merit* is destroyed; and yet if he have no merit, he cannot be chosen! Though this learned Father, however, leaves us in clouds and perplexities, and encircles us with contradictions, the inspired volume is clear and explicit on the point. "And you hath *he quickened* who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world." "We are *his workmanship, created* in Christ Jesus unto good works."* "The new man is *created* in

* Eph. ii. 1, 2.

righteousness and true holiness."* "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ." (ημας —συνεζωοποιησε τω Χριστω, *vel* εν Χριστω.) That is, *we, Jews and Gentiles together*, he has caused to live spiritually by Christ. "By grace are ye saved."† *Grace* is the alpha and omega of our salvation; and the mode of its administration is by effecting a vital union with Christ; which is the only security a fallen creature has for faith and good works. Hence the principle by which we believe is called "the faith *of the operation of God*."

§ 25. If God chooses faith on the foreknowledge of one and another believing previous to any quickening operation or energy, there was an infallible ground of that foreknowledge; because to know certainly beforehand what is in itself uncertain, is a bald contradiction. Thus God foreknew with absolute certainty that Adam would transgress. His sinful posterity are in circumstances far less favourable for performing any spiritual act. Now I would ask any considerate person, is it easier for a sinner to believe with his heart in the Lord Jesus Christ, than it was for Adam to abstain from

* Eph. iv. 24. † Eph. ii. 4, 5.

the forbidden fruit? And if he failed in circumstances so favourable to encounter every temptation, what conceivable ground of certainty is there that millions of sinful creatures will educe from themselves, *unaided by divine operation*, a spiritual principle and an effectual exercise of faith in the Saviour? It is no wonder that the Romish church is so fond of resorting to the protection of some favourite Fathers, when they find them such valuable auxiliaries in upholding their doctrine of human merit: but that any Protestant divine should countenance their folly, is in truth too much like the desertion of an Israelite to the camp of the Philistines.

§ 26. The Bishop of Lincoln contends that *Baptism confers divine grace*, and to confirm his opinion he appeals to the Fathers. For my own part, I regard his Lordship to the full as good a patriarch as many of them, and could as readily take his word for a sentiment. I shall therefore presume to offer a remark or two on the following passage from CHRYSOSTOM: '"For you also 'enjoyed divine grace at your baptism, and were 'made partaker of the Spirit, although not so 'as to be able to perform miracles, but in a 'degree sufficient to secure a right and correct 'behaviour; so that the perverseness lies in your 'own negligence only."'* In the first place, as

* Refut. p. 150.

this is a mere assertion without proof, as there is not even an attempt to produce evidence for it, what auditor or reader could rationally receive it as a fact? It is so far from being a self-evident truth, that it requires either decisive scripture testimony or some cogent inferrable argument, in order to induce conviction. In the next place, every catechumen was supposed to enjoy divine grace before he was baptized; otherwise, what concern had he with that sacred rite which requires of adults the believing with the heart? And who can conceive of a person possessed of divine grace without being also a "partaker of the Spirit" of grace in his ordinary operations? If CHRYSOSTOM therefore only reminds baptized persons of what they enjoyed at their baptism, but not by their baptism, and that they were then partakers of the Spirit, but not as the consequence of that rite, on which point the minister and the faithful formed a charitable opinion; it forms no argument for the instrumentality of baptism in *conveying* these blessings.

§ 27. And, finally, if it be said that it was in the days of this Father a doctrine acknowledged in the church, and therefore did not require proof; that the catechumens were taught to expect the blessings of grace and the Holy Spirit, at that time; and possibly the baptized might be conscious of possessing these blessings

by means of the ordinance; I beg leave to offer a few other observations. If this was a doctrine "acknowledged" in the church at that time, we ask, on what ground was it so acknowledged? Was it on the ground of scripture testimony? Let it be produced, and fairly interpreted. Was it on the ground of apostolic tradition? Who is evidence for this, and what credit is due to his testimony? Even supposing the tradition did not pass through a corrupt channel, and assume new aspects from successive retailers, we still demand, who has appointed apostolic tradition as a standard of doctrine in the church? A rational enquirer after truth has no more to do with pretended traditions than he has with ecclesiastical councils. "To the law and to the testimony," the appeal should be made, respecting the enjoyment of divine grace and participation of the Spirit.

§ 28. How the catechumens were "taught," and what they were taught to expect, is of no weight further than as their instructions were scriptural. While human nature is ever liable to err, and the best of men are imperfect, to substitute a question of fact (were it well established) for a question of right, or to substitute evidence for the one in the room of the other, is the direct road to a gulph of errors. The true question here is, not what the Fathers

or the Church *thought* or what they taught, but what they *ought* to think and teach, according to the divinely appointed standard of Christian doctrine and practice? What church is there in the world, however corrupt, but *pretends* that its doctrines are founded either on the scripture, or on apostolic tradition united to it? As to the supposition of the baptized being "conscious" of receiving grace and the Spirit as the immediate effect of baptism, it would come with a very ill grace from any who are for ever declaiming against modern enthusiasts. Ought they not rather to infer, that there were enthusiasts in ancient times, than adopt the supposition, as an example worthy of imitation? I admit that a subject of real vital Christianity may be conscious of the *effects* of divine operation in his own mind. He may be able to say from consciousness, as one did on another occasion, "whereas I was once blind I now see." "He that believeth has the *witness* in himself." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." He has new apprehensions, new judgments, a new mode of drawing conclusions, a new method of regulating his thoughts, affections, and conduct, of all which he must be more or less "conscious" when he reflects. But why such effects should be supposed by the baptized to be produced by the baptismal rite,

I have yet to learn. Have these baptized individuals, or any in modern times *testified* this? Or if they have, what credit is due to them? Suppose they say, that they have experienced peculiar delight, or were much animated in devotion and obedience after, immediately after, the ceremony of baptism; is this any legitimate evidence of this ordinance having *conveyed* to them divine grace and the Holy Spirit? May not the same effect attend any other divine ordinance, as preaching, the holy supper, or private devotion? In short, they who can imbibe the sentiment of CHRYSOSTOM in the passage quoted, need only be placed in favourable circumstances, in order to become as good enthusiasts as any of their neighbours; at least their principles will not retard the event.

§ 29. CHRYSOSTOM advances another sentiment which must not be overlooked; which is, that *graces given have no crowns.* ' " Such is ' the nature of graces *given*, that they have no ' crowns, no rewards. For a gift is not the ' *merit* of those who receive, but the *liberality* ' of him who gives." '* So then, infants who are not, according to JEROME, born without Christ, and who according to CHRYSOSTOM, if baptized, have divine grace and the Holy Spirit,

* Refut. p. 160.

must be cast into a *limbus infantium*, for they can have no crowns of happiness, nor the reward of a Saviour's merits, in heaven, because they had not at death the merit of faith and good works to support them! A professor, indeed, who *pretends* that he is a child of grace, who "boasts of a false gift," and is as "a cloud without water," or a tree having leaves without good fruit, has just cause to tremble at the judgment which awaits him. But how improper, not to say absurd, to advance the above quoted sentence as an oracular maxim! *Why* may not persons be crowned for what they *are*, as well as for what they have done? Surely he who has a renewed spirit and a cleansed heart, though he has not had an opportunity of shewing his fruit of good works, is a proper subject of a crown of glory from God the righteous judge.

§ 30. Again, CHRYSOSTOM maintains that *grace does not prevent our choice.* '"For neither 'God, nor the grace of the Spirit, *prevents* our 'choice; but it calls and waits, so that we go 'of our own accord and willingly; then after we 'have thus gone, it supplies all assistance from 'itself."'* To the same purpose is a remark in THEODORET: '"The God of the universe, as 'God, knows all things, at a distance; he does

* Refut. p. 462.

'not however *necessitate* one man to practice 'virtue, and another to work wickedness. For 'if he himself forced to either, he could not 'justly applaud and crown the one, and decree 'punishment against the other.'"* "God does not *prevent* our choice,—does not *necessitate* any one." Here we recognize something more than rational liberty, even a supposed power in the will to determine itself; a sentiment which I have repeatedly had occasion to notice, as inconsistent with religion and the nature of things. It is observable how different were the sentiments of the compilers of the English Common Prayer, from that which is here avowed by CHRYSOSTOM. There we find, in "a Prayer for the Clergy and People," these words: "*Send down* upon our Bishops and Curates, and all Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful *Spirit of thy grace;* and that they may truly please thee, *pour upon them* the continual dew of thy blessing." And in "the second Collect at Evening Prayer" we read, "O God, from whom *all holy desires*, all good counsels, and *all just works* do proceed, &c." Also in "a Prayer for the King's Majesty,"—"and so replenish him with the *grace of thy Holy Spirit, that he may alway incline to thy will*, and walk in thy way." In "a Prayer for the Royal

* Refut. p. 506.

Family" the Minister and Congregation supplicate, saying, "*endue them* with thy Holy Spirit; *enrich them* with thy heavenly grace." And even in a prayer ascribed to CHRYSOSTOM himself, it is said, "Almighty God, who *hast given us grace* at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee." Surely he cannot mean to acknowledge merely the *outward favour* of assembling together, which was common to the pious and the profane, to the sincere and the hypocrite. He must rather intend *inward grace* which is given to those who are true Christians, and which, by charitable construction, was ascribed to the Church as an assembly of Christian people.

§ 31. As this point is of great moment, and is in a manner the very hinge on which his Lordship's controversy with the Calvinists turns, I shall produce a few more witnesses out of the Formularies of the English Church, which ought to have no small weight with its true members. The tenth Article seems to have been drawn up on purpose to oppose the notion of CHRYSOSTOM and THEODORET held out in the passages above cited. "We have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without *the grace of God*, by Christ *preventing us, that we may have a good will*, and working with us when we have that good will." In this Article we

are taught, in the plainest manner, that the grace of God "*prevents* our choice," in direct opposition to CHRYSOSTOM's assertion. It represents the grace of God not only as "working with us when we have a good will," but also "prevents us, that we may have a good will." And this view of the Article immediately follows from the statement given of "Original or Birth-sin" in the Ninth Article: "Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk,) but it is the fault and corruption of the *nature of every man*, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is *of his own nature inclined to evil*, so that the flesh *lusteth always contrary to the Spirit*." If this be the real state of *every man*, what prospect is there of his recovery without *preventing grace?* That man has not any claim upon God for this assistance, is apparent from the very notion of its being *grace;* and yet that man is bound in duty to seek this preventing grace, is evident from its being held forth to him as a matter of promise, which he may possess on terms prescribed. In these views there is no inconsistency; because our native corruption and impotence dissolves no obligation of dutiful compliance. The proper mode of considering the point, as a doctrine, is *a posteriori;* and the question to be decided is this:

Admitting the fact, that any man has a spiritual choice, to what is the goodness of that choice to be ascribed? Is it to preventing grace, or to a self-determining power in the will *prior* to such a grace? We conclude, and so does the English Church, that it is to be ascribed to Grace.

§ 32. The words of THEODORET, that God "does not *necessitate* one man to practice virtue, and another to work wickedness," may be admitted in a compound sense; but not in a divided sense. God does not "necessitate" any man to "work wickedness." Nor is there any necessitating *force* upon the *will* to practice virtue. But his remark, as a universal proposition, is subversive of an important theological truth, taught in the holy scriptures, and by the Church of England, its Offices and Articles. Without some kind of necessitation, there can be no certainty, or no certain gracious effect; and yet this effect, as certain to follow, is every where implied in the Church-Prayers. For instance, in the prayer which relates to "those that are to be admitted to holy orders," God is petitioned "to *guide* and *govern the minds* of his servants the Bishops and Pastors of his flock, *that they may* lay hands suddenly on no man, but *faithfully and wisely* make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry." And

in the "Prayer for all conditions of men," this is one petition: "More especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church; that it may be *so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all* who profess and call themselves Christians, *may be led* into the way of *truth, and hold the faith* in the unity of spirit, in the bond of of peace, and in righteousness of life." Again, in the Collect for "the first Sunday in Advent," this petition is included: "Almighty God, *give us grace that we may* cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light." It would be easy to fill many pages with extracts from the prayers, collects, &c. of the Established Church of the same tendency, in which "preventing grace" and a necessitating influence are clearly implied.

§ 33. Is it not clearly implied, that IF God is pleased to "guide and govern the minds of his servants," the certain effect will be their acting "faithfully and wisely." And IF the Church catholic be "guided and governed by the good spirit of God" in some *special manner*, the certain effect will be truth, faith, and righteousness. Should it be said, the implication is, that then they "may," if they please, act faithfully and wisely, &c.; this would render the petitions both superfluous and unmeaning. For are not men always at liberty,

if they please, to do every thing that is right and praiseworthy? The design of asking for grace and the Holy Spirit, is to secure the event, to make what we desire certain; and consequently, that these divine aids may prove in us a necessitating cause of the event. If we have not such meaning in our prayers, when we ask for grace and the Holy Spirit, what meaning can we have? Are they any better than vain repetitions of words without a meaning? When we pray, "Lord have mercy upon us, and *incline our hearts* to keep this law," does it not imply, that IF God be pleased to do this, we shall keep his law? When we supplicate the Almighty in these words, "Mortify and kill all vices in us; and *so strengthen us by thy grace*, that by the *innocency* of our lives, and *constancy* of our faith even unto death, we may glorify thy holy name," is it not implied, that the certainty of the events depends on that grace which is desired? If any from this doctrine of the church and of the holy scriptures, wrongfully infer, that if grace necessitates in any sense, nothing is left for man to do, they know not "what they say, nor whereof they affirm." They might urge, with equal propriety, because God necessitates our souls and faculties to exist, we have nothing to do with thinking, reasoning, fearing, or loving. Grace in the heart is a living principle, at the sovereign disposal of God, and

the exercise of this principle, when obtained, is as much our duty, as it is to consult the preservation of our lives and of our faculties. And as the existence of our lives and faculties necessitates thoughts and volitions of some kind; so divine grace, existing as a principle in the soul, necessitates the goodness of our thoughts and volitions. But not so, *exhibited* grace, as an object of *choice*, which will be received or rejected, improved or abused, according to the state of the mind. These important differences CHRYSOSTOM and THEODORET, and many others of the Christian Fathers, perpetually confound.

§ 34. Though much more might have been said on the quotations from the Fathers, whoever has done me the honour to accompany me through the whole of this chapter will probably think it too long. Considering, however, that his Lordship's chapter on this head is much longer, that many pay undue deference to these writers, and that few English authors have introduced them except as authorities, I thought it might be of some service to the Christian cause to examine their opinions more minutely than otherwise would have been needful. It would not be difficult to produce whole volumes of quotations from the ancient Fathers upon the plan adopted in the Refutation; but to read, mark, and translate, without any arrangement

of the subjects, would but little conduce, I apprehend, either to instruction or edification. By the classification of their sentiments contained in this examination, the reader has a tolerable specimen of what might be expected in a larger collection on controverted subjects. Valuable and edifying extracts, indeed, might be made from their writings, digested under proper heads; but for that purpose the translation should be free, and their inconsistencies excluded. And even such a work, in proportion to the success of its accomplishment, might circulate too high an estimate of their general merit, and lead the injudicious to infer that they are really deserving of all that indiscriminate respect which the ages of superstition have been disposed to confer upon them.

Chap. VI.

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE GROUNDS OF THE INCONSISTENCIES APPARENT IN THE BISHOP'S AVOWED SENTIMENTS, AND IN HIS QUOTATIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

Sect. I.

The misapplication of Terms which are equivocal in their meaning.

§ 1. Inconsistencies in the "Refutation," from a misapplication of the Terms *power*, *ability*, being *enabled*, &c. § 2, 3. Exemplified in his Lordship's account of Cain and Abel; and § 4. In his account of the Sin of Adam and the Merits of Christ.

§ 5. The misapplication of *cause* for *occasion*. § 6. Of *Salvation* for the *Means* of Salvation. § 7, 8. Of being *elected* to *means*, for being elected to *happiness*.

§ 9—11. Inconsistencies arising from the misapplication of the terms *denial*, *preterition*, and *reprobation*.

§ 12. Observations on equivocal and undefined Terms in controversy.

§ 1. I think it has been fully shewn, in the preceding parts of this volume, that there are many inconsistencies in the Bishop's own avowed sentiments, as well as in the quotations he has produced from the Fathers. A scheme of thoughts *may* be, at least in a considerable measure, consistent with itself, without being consistent with the true standard, God's revealed will: but when a systematic view of doctrines fails in self-inconsistency, it *must* be wrong in

some of its parts. Such a failure may be owing to several causes; and, after an attentive examination of his Lordship's book, it appears to me that one of these causes is the misapplication of terms which are equivocal in their meaning. This appears in the frequent employment of the term *power—ability*—being *enabled*, &c. It being a plain case that without these, in *one* sense, man could not be the subject of divine law, or be responsible for his actions, though destitute of them in *another* sense, his Lordship often argues from the one to the other.

§ 2. When speaking of Cain and Abel, and God's address to the former, his Lordship says, 'May we not hence infer, that the immediate 'sons of Adam lived under a divine law, which 'they had the *power* of obeying and disobeying?'* They had no doubt a physical 'power,' a good rule, a merciful promise, and favourable opportunities; these were common to Cain and Abel; but had they *alike* that 'power' which consists in "a good inclination," or "a good and honest heart?" If each had *this* 'power,' then is not "every man of his own nature inclined to evil," a point which his Lordship acknowledges. He allows, too, that 'a sincere disposition to obey the

* Refut. p. 5.

'divine will was all that was necessary, to *enable* 'a person to judge whether the doctrine preached 'by Christ was the invention of man or a reve-'lation from God.'* Consequently, the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Rulers, who rejected Christ's doctrine, notwithstanding they had 'a practicable 'rule,' a plain testimony, convincing miracles, and favourable opportunities 'to obey the divine 'will,' were not '*enabled*' to obey it, even in his Lordship's own sense of the term.

§ 3. His Lordship asserts, that Cain had 'the *power* of obeying,'—and yet he states, that 'a man *cannot*, by his own natural faculties and '*unassisted* exertions, so counteract and correct 'the imperfection and corruption derived from 'the fall of Adam, as to be *able* of himself to 'acquire that true and lively faith which would 'secure salvation.'† What is become, then, of Cain's 'power?' It is resolved into divine assistance. But if he was divinely assisted, where is the evidence of the fact? And if divine assistance does not secure 'a *sincere* '*disposition* to obey the divine will,' why should man *pray* for that assistance, as his Lordship recommends, *that he may be obedient?* If Cain *had* divine assistance, which 'enabled' him to obey, and yet did not obey, of what use is it to

* Refut. p. 20. † Ib. p. 53.

pray for that which produces no effect? And if he had not effectual assistance, in what sense had he 'power,' or 'was *enabled* to obey,' except in *another* sense of power, which annihilates his Lordship's argument?

§ 4. Again, when speaking of the sin of Adam and the merits of Christ as co-extensive, his Lordship observes, 'the force of the argument is destroyed, and the most acknowledged 'rules of language are violated, by so interpreting this passage, as to contend, that all men 'are liable to punishment on account of the sin 'of Adam, and that a few only are *enabled* to 'avoid that punishment through the death of 'Christ.'* Here the word 'enabled' is confounded with having objective or moral means of avoiding punishment through the death of Christ. Taking the word in this sense, which his argument requires, how could his Lordship consistently oppose even CALVIN himself, who admitted that every man to whom the gospel is presented is 'enabled,' in this acceptation of the term, to avoid punishment, through the death of Christ. His Lordship's quotation from the reformer proves this: '"God indeed affirms, 'that he wills the conversion of all men; and 'he destines his exhortations in common to all:

* Refut. p. 190.

'their efficacy, however, depends upon the spirit 'of regeneration."'* The means, as such, are sufficient, and such as becomes a moral governor to afford; but the *other* kind of ability, which consists in 'a sincere disposition to obey,' proceeds from the sovereign grace of God, whereby they are, properly speaking, 'enabled' to obey.

§ 5. Sometimes the word *cause* is confounded with *occasion*, and an argument is drawn from the equivocal use of the first of these terms. Thus, for example, in the following passage: 'Can we then suppose that God sees his 'rational creatures not only in need, but ob-'noxious to death and misery, and yet *refuses* '*his aid* to rescue them from impending ruin? 'The gospel, instead of being a proof of God's '' good will towards men,' would rather shew 'his determination, that they should add to 'their guilt, and increase their condemnation. 'Instead of *raising us* from a death in sin to a 'life of righteousness, it would be the inevitable '*cause* of more heinous wickedness, and of sorer 'punishment, to the greater part of mankind.'† His Lordship must allow, on the most indubitable evidence of plain facts, that the gospel does *not* raise from a death in sin to a life of righteousness 'the greater part' even of those who

* Refut. p. 536. † Ib. p. 196.

read and hear it. With what consistency then can he say, that God 'refuses his aid' to those who are not raised from a life of sin to a life of righteousness by its aid? If the gospel 'would 'be the cause of more heinous wickedness, and a 'sorer punishment,' *because* it does not so 'raise' them, then on his own principle, it *is* such a cause. But, how can a proclamation of mercy be a 'cause' of wickedness and punishment? Surely on no scheme can it be more than the *occasion* of these consequences. The gospel, like its divine author, is "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence" to the wicked; but to them who are well disposed, it is precious. To the one, it is "a savour of death unto death," to the other, "a savour of life unto life." In short, in whatever sense we understand the word 'cause' in his Lordship's argument, without changing its import, it turns against himself.

§ 6. The idea of *salvation*, again, is often confounded with the *means* of salvation, especially when connected with *election*, and a conclusion is drawn from the one to the other, which has no force except from an assumed equivocal use of the terms, thus rendering his Lordship's argument incompatible with his professed sentiments. Thus he states and infers: 'At the close of his first epistle, St. Peter 'says, 'The church that is at Babylon, *elected*

'together with you:' here the apostle calls the 'whole church of Babylon also *elect*, which 'again proves that the word is *applied generally* '*to collective bodies* of Christians, to *all who* in 'one or more cities or countries *professed Chris-* '*tianity, without any discrimination*, and that it 'is not *confined* to individuals who must neces- 'sarily be saved, or who were predestinated by 'God to certain salvation; or even to those 'who will *actually be saved*.'* What is this but saying, that to be 'elected' to the means of salvation, is not to be predestinated to certain salvation itself? We all know that to be 'elected' to the participation of the means of happiness, is not the same thing as to be 'elected' to happiness. In the former sense, 'collective bodies,' even 'all who profess Christianity without any 'discrimination' may be 'elected,' and yet the greater part of them, through their own fault, not saved. Now, his Lordship's own account of election is, that the actual enjoyment of the means of salvation, consisting in 'Christianity 'professed,' constitutes the persons 'elected;' and therefore with what consistency can he urge, that 'those who will *actually be saved*,' are not in another, that is, the Calvinistic sense, 'elected?' If the fact of superior means and privileges imply *election*, as he allows, how can

* Refut. p. 205.

he consistently oppose the Calvinists, who say, that those who are in *fact* saved, are 'elected' to that salvation? Divest the terms of their ambiguity, and the case will appear plain; collective bodies, because they are favoured with the *means* of salvation, are 'elected' to those means, and individuals, because they are favoured with *salvation itself* in heaven, are 'elected' to that salvation. For his Lordship to oppose this, is to buffet himself.

§ 7. Of the same complexion is the following passage: 'St. Paul says to Timothy, 'I 'endure all things for the elect's sake, that 'they may also obtain salvation,' &c.—This 'is perfectly consistent with the idea of the 'elect being *Christian converts in general*, who 'might or might not be saved, but cannot be 'reconciled with the Calvinistic notion, that 'the *elect* are persons infallibly destined to 'salvation.'* His Lordship allows that 'Chris-'tian converts in general' are 'elected' that they may obtain the *means* of salvation, and we allow the same; but then this is by no means inconsistent with *some* of these converts being 'elected' to still higher blessings. And if it were inconsistent for St. Paul to "endure all things for the elect's sake" in the latter sense,

* Refut. p. 212.

was it not equally so in his Lordship's acceptation? The Calvinists may turn his argument upon himself; of what use was it for Paul to travel from country to country and suffer all things for the sake of 'Christian converts in general,' seeing they were *elected* to become such in the purpose of God, and included in the plan of his providence? If they were "chosen" to become such in the divine purpose, why should St. Paul endure so many hardships to secure what was already fixed? In this case, also, while his Lordship argues against the Calvinists, he is equally the opponent of himself.

§ 8. A similar confusion of terms occurs in the use of the words *denial*, *preterition*, and *reprobation*. 'If God of his own good pleasure 'elected certain persons exclusively to be eter-'nally happy, by furnishing them, through his 'especial grace, with his own appointed means 'of faith in the death of Christ, it is implied, 'that those means are *denied* to the rest of the 'human race, who are *passed over*, and *left* to 'their own unassisted power. This *denial* or '*preterition* is in fact *reprobation;* for both 'Calvinists and ourselves believe, that 'man 'by his own natural strength and good works '*cannot* turn to faith,' the only appointed mean 'of salvation; and that 'the fault and corrup-'tion of every man that is naturally engendered

'of Adam, deserveth God's wrath and damna-
'tion, which he is of himself unable to avert."' *
Here we are taught that 'denial,' 'preterition,'
and 'reprobation,' are synonymous; and that
the *election* of some to certain privileges, implies
that these privileges 'are *denied* to the rest of
'the human race, who are *passed over* and *left*
'to their own unassisted power.' His Lordship
is here condemned on his own shewing. He
allows that all professing Christians are 'elected;'
consequently, those who are not professing
Christians, to whom the means of salvation
were never sent, are 'denied' these means; that
is, all who are not elected, in his *own* sense of
the term, are the objects of 'denial,' of 'prete-
'rition,' and of 'reprobation,'—and these are by
far 'the greater part' of the human race.

§ 10. From his Lordship's distinct confession,
he, no less than the Calvinists, believes that
man by his own strength 'cannot' turn to the
appointed mean of salvation—yea, *deserveth*
God's wrath, which he is of himself unable to
avert. Of course, then, those millions of the
human race who are not 'elected' to the *means*
of salvation, are, according to his own scheme,
denied, passed over, left, reprobated. If Elec-
tion and Reprobation are inseparable, or neces-

* Refut. p. 266.

sarily imply each other, as taught by CALVIN and his Lordship, wherein consists the difference between the reformer and the dignitary? Truly in this, that the former regards a number of mankind individually, and the latter a number of them collectively, reprobated. The one parcels out his numbers in retail, the other disposes of them in the gross. Which of these ideas is the most revolting, as implying 'denial,' it is difficult to say. In this volume, at any rate, no such doctrine is held.

§ 11. All mankind are chosen to enjoy *some* benefits; a part of them are elected, as nations who enjoy the gospel, to superior benefits; Christian congregations to whom the gospel is faithfully preached, and the ordinances of Christ are duly administered, are elected in a still higher sense; while those individuals among them who have a sincere disposition, and a lively faith, to whom it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his name—those who have preventing and confirming grace, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation — are elected to blessings so great that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man" to conceive their greatness and excellence. But

while we hold election in different senses or degrees, we disavow the idea of 'denial' in the *active* sense. We maintain no 'reprobation' except what belongs to those of mankind who are finally (αδοκιμοι) *disapproved*, in the scriptural sense of this term. By hastily adopting the Hyper-Calvinistic idea of Election and Reprobation as inseparable, though the 17th Article wisely disjoins them, his Lordship exhibits another display of that species of warfare, in which he seems so peculiarly to excel.

§ 12. The attentive reader of the "Refutation" may perceive many other terms, especially in the quotations from the Fathers, which are used in an equivocal sense, where the reasoning is fallacious, and inconsistent with sentiments avowed by themselves. For instance, they frequently confound necessity and force, cause and occasion, freedom and power, grace, in the objective, and in the subjective sense, election in a connected, and in an unconnected sense, &c. While men consider themselves privileged to use equivocal terms in an undefined sense,—instead of candid controversy, for the purpose of investigating and ascertaining truth, its legitimate end, their contest will invariably degenerate into unprofitable and irritating logomachy. Were theologians and writers on moral science to imitate the laudable example of mathe-

maticians and judicious writers on natural philosophy, by fixing either univocal or defined terms to specific ideas, their lucubrations would be far more honourable to themselves and useful to the public.

SECT. II.

Assumed Principles of MORAL OBLIGATION.

§ 1. The "Refutation" assumes that *something more* than physical powers, moral means, and Freedom, is requisite to constitute Moral Obligation. § 2. This assumption exemplified in a variety of quoted phrases. § 3. To suppose that *internal grace* is *essential* to moral Obligation is subversive of the idea of Moral Government.
§ 4. The "Refutation" assumes that the *Liberty* of Moral Agents is a physical *Power*.—The fallacy exposed. § 5. That the efficacy of moral means does not essentially depend on a *previous disposition*. —This proved an inconsistency. § 6. That an *influence* followed with a *certainty* of result in moral actions is incompatible with *freedom*.—The assumption disapproved. § 7. That if the event be *certain*, means are superfluous.—This proved to be erroneous.
§ 8. The true notion of Moral Obligation should be sought from the *Essential Characters* of God and the creature; and § 9. From the *Relation* subsisting between the Governor and the governed.
§ 10. The *Importance* of correct views of Moral Obligation.

§ 1. ANOTHER ground of inconsistency with truth and with themselves in the Bishop and the Fathers quoted by him, is the assumption of certain principles of Moral Obligation, which are demonstrably unfounded. One of these is, that something more than physical powers (or faculties), moral means, and freedom, is requisite to constitute obligation, in a moral sense. By "physical *powers*" I mean, intellect and will, (an intellect to represent an object, a will to choose it,) and a capability of enjoying the chief good,—which is that excellency of our nature by which we are essentially distinguished

from the brute creation, and by which we are physically capacitated to enjoy happiness in God. By "moral *means*" I understand objective inducements, or considerations presented to our physical powers. And by "freedom" I mean exemption from constraint to evil, and restraint from good, in our elections. Beside these requisites, however, the advocates for self-determination of the will, imagine that some occult quality,—an undefined and undefinable something behind the scene, which, however, they denominate active power, &c., but of which they do not profess to form any precise idea—is needful to constitute moral obligation, or to render us accountable agents.

§ 2. Thus his Lordship often asserts that man has 'the *power* of obeying,' is '*capable* of 'obeying;' that 'God gives to *every man*—a '*power* to perform the conditions of the gospel;' that 'to *deny* this *power* to *any individual*, would 'be inconsistent with the attributes of God.' Sometimes this power is termed 'baptismal 'grace,' and sometimes we are told, 'that *every* '*man* is *enabled* to attain salvation through the 'merits of Christ;' that '*all* who were to *par-* '*take* of Adam's corrupt nature were to *partake* 'also of the appointed remedy;' that the second Adam '*restored* all to *life*,' that 'the Jews had 'a *power* of understanding and believing;' that

'it is in the *power* of every one to attain eternal 'happiness;' that 'God has '*enabled* every man 'born into the world, to work out his own sal-'vation;' that Christ died 'to *enable* every 'individual descendant of Adam to obtain 'eternal happiness;' that 'if *mankind* had not '*the power*, by free-will, to avoid what is dis-'graceful, and to choose what is good, *they* '*would not be responsible* for their actions.' Again, God determined to make men and angels 'with *full power* to act justly.' God created angels and men 'to do whatever he 'gave them *strength to be able to do.*' 'We 'have produced wickedness; but those who 'have produced it, *have it in their power* again 'to renounce it.' Man has '*power* over him-'self.' Men 'will receive the just judgment of 'God, because they have not worked good 'when *they had it in their power* to work it.' 'Man *is in his own power* with respect to faith—'in his own *free-will and power.*' The wicked Jews were '*able* to act justly.' 'Neither praise 'nor dispraise, nor honours, nor punishments, 'would be *just*, if the soul had not the *power* of 'desiring or rejecting.' God has given us a 'free sovereign *power.*' 'That thing is *in our* '*own power*, of which we are equally masters, as 'of its opposite.' 'God pardons what is past, 'but *every one* has the future *in his own power.*' 'Every one has the *power* of choosing good, and

'of choosing evil.' 'When he gives other commandments, he shews that it is *in our power* to keep them.' 'It is the will of God that man should obey the understanding, and he has *received power* to subject himself.' Sometimes, again, this inward power is expressed in very different language. 'No one is born *without Christ*:' and no one is born 'without having in himself *the seeds* of wisdom, and of justice, and of the other virtues.' 'What would be more unjust, than that those should be punished, who are not *able to do* what ought to be done?' '*Grace* is *poured upon all*, excepting neither Jew nor Greek—nor old nor young; but coming to all equally.'

§ 3. These passages, and many more of the same tendency, are evidently designed to shew, that mankind possess a 'power' or 'strength' which is the ground of responsibility. If the meaning be, that man has physical powers, moral means, and freedom; why are they produced against Calvinists, who admit this in the fullest extent? But if something more be intended, as is probably the case in several expressions and phrases, *what is it?* If it admit of no description or explanation, may not its existence readily be doubted? Is it baptismal grace? Then but a small part are under moral obligation! Is it a portion of the grace of Christ, afforded to

every child of Adam? Two considerations offer themselves against the doctrine: first, it wants evidence to support it; and, secondly, the supposition that internal grace is a requisite ground of moral obligation, is subversive of the very nature of moral government. Even supposing that every descendant of Adam has, from his birth, a portion of the grace of Christ, this would not alter the case. As the very notion of moral government implies a possible deviation from rectitude and a loss of the divine favour; if the ground of the obligation did not continue unalterably the same, through all vicissitudes and bereavements, the greater the moral impotence, in other words the depravity of the subject, the more free from obligation! If this be not utterly subversive of moral government, it is difficult to say what is. On this principle, our first father Adam, by his delinquency, must have removed himself from obligation to the Supreme Governor, because destitute of an essential requisite: and, for the same reason, the fallen angels are under no obligation to love their Maker, but must have removed themselves from his government, and have a ground of accusation against him, because his claims continue, and yet they have no inward grace, as a requisite of moral obligation.

§ 4. Another ground of inconsistency, and

of much confusion, is the notion, that the Liberty which is essential to moral obligation, is a *physical power*. It is more than probable, that this idea was affixed to several of the words and phrases above quoted. Without doubt, however, this is a very common idea with the advocates of a self-determining power. The word 'Liberty' and the epithet 'free' prefixed to 'will,' being positive terms, by the use of which the mind is too apt to be influenced in forming ideas; we are in danger of being betrayed into the notion that some positive idea is intended to be conveyed by them, and therefore that they express some physical power. But if we substitute negative terms conveying the very same ideas, the fallacy may be more easily detected. What is *free-will*, but unrestrained, unconstrained, unbound, or unforced will? Whatever terms are employed to express it, the idea is decidedly negative, as denoting a denial or exemption. Who can describe, who can conceive any thing more as implied in the idea of liberty or freedom? The will indeed is a physical faculty by which power is exerted, but its freedom is a negation of all foreign interference in its exercise.

§ 5. As another ground of embarrassment, in reference to moral obligation, we may notice

the supposition, that the efficacy of moral means does not essentially depend on a previous disposition of the heart. Moral means are objective considerations presented to the mind, in the way of persuasion or dissuasion; and the effect as either good or bad, in a moral sense, will be according to the manner in which the free-will stands affected towards them. The same moral means affect different free-volitions in a manner directly opposite; but this could not take place without some essential difference in the persons themselves. The will in both cases is equally free, and as a faculty it uniformly seeks apparent good. Consequently if there were not some principle in the mind more radical than free-will, moral means would affect every mind in the same manner. Now what can this principle be but the disposition of the heart, as either good or bad, light or dark, according to which the moral means *appear* either eligible or ineligible? A depraved state of mind sees nothing practically eligible in a holy life, though the person has no convincing argument against it; nay, though many arguments in its favour may be confessed by him to be unanswerable. On the other hand, a virtuous or gracious state of mind, styled in scripture "a good and honest heart," sees a holy life practically eligible; and the free-will chooses

accordingly. In both cases, the moral obligation is the same, though the results are diametrically opposite.

§ 6. Nearly similar to this is another perplexing prejudice, that an influence, or an efficiency, securing the *certain* result of moral actions, is incompatible with liberty: but this prejudice is occasioned by mistaken apprehensions of the true nature of liberty. A principle of grace, ameliorating and enlightening the mind, has no more tendency to diminish freedom, than had the spotless purity and superior unction of Jesus Christ to diminish his liberty. It was in consequence of confused notions of liberty, and its incompatibility with preventing grace, that some of the Fathers, (when *duty* was out of the question) advanced this crude sentiment, — that the beginning must be from ourselves. If indeed they had confined this notion to the *obligation* of beginning from ourselves, it might well be admitted; for a defect of principle, as before shewn, does not alter the ground of obligation. A depraved descendant of Adam is as much obliged to love God, and to live in righteousness and true holiness, as Adam himself was in a state of integrity. The reason is, that both alike have the same ground of moral obligation — physical powers, moral means, and freedom. Take away any one

of these, and moral obligation ceases; but while these continue, the obligation remains unimpaired. The design of divine influence, therefore, is not to weaken, or in any way to alter the obligation, but to '*enable*' the subject to discharge it.

§ 7. Another prejudice that pervades the "Refutation" is, that if the event be certain, exhortations and other moral means are superfluous. One might think that the whole system of prophecy is a sufficient exposure of this false notion. If prophetic events were not certain, how could they be certainly predicted? and yet we find that they are constantly accomplished by the use of moral means. In fact, these means are an essential requisite for moral determinations. If the law or the gospel were not made known to free agents, how could they love or hate them, and how could prophecies of these results be certainly accomplished? God foreknows not only the free-will of the agent, but also the principle according to which he will view moral means; and therefore what will be his determinations in given circumstances, with infinite precision. He knows what a free-agent left to his own principle, will do or will not do; and what the same or another agent, still equally free, when endowed with another principle in different degrees,

according to divinely wise and sovereign pleasure, will determine, or will not determine. If the depraved were not exhorted, how could a non-compliance be foretold? And if the better principled were not exhorted, how could their compliance be recorded as futurely *certain?*

§ 8. Having noticed some of the false grounds of moral obligation, it may be proper to subjoin a few remarks on its nature. In order to ascertain this, it is in vain that we look to what mankind actually do, or to observe the operations of the human mind, on the plan of inductive philosophy. On the present subject, to know by the most accurate observation the matter of fact, will never teach us the matter of right. From what is done by a free agent, we cannot infer what ought to be done. We must therefore have recourse to the essential characters of God and man respectively, and the consequent subsisting relations. Through the medium of divine revelation, which fully approves itself to right reason, we learn, that God is the only independent and self-sufficient being —that he is the objective chief good—holy in his nature—equitable in his proceedings—and sovereignly beneficent. The essential character of man, as a subject of moral government, is, that he is absolutely dependent upon God—is possessed of intellect, will, and freedom—and is capable of enjoying the chief good.

§ 9. Hence we see the relation subsisting between the Governor and the governed. There can be no happiness but in harmony with his will, which is ever conformable to the absolute rectitude of his nature. A voluntary harmony with his will, is real virtue; and the want of it, in moral agents, is real vice. A moral agent who, in his determinations, opposes God's holy will, at the same time opposes his holy nature. Now, to suppose that a voluntary determination of the agent, in contrariety to the will and nature of the governor, is not *opposed* by equity, would be a contradiction; would be to suppose God to be adverse to evil, and yet not adverse to it; to be unchangeable in his aversion to what is wrong, and yet changeable. Hence to be opposed by equity, is to be *obliged* to endure the consequence of not enjoying the chief good; and when a capacity for happiness is not gratified, the necessary effect is misery. Consequently, he that *will not be virtuous*, must be, is, *obliged* to be miserable, from the nature of things, that is, from the nature of the Governor and the governed.

§ 10. Were this point properly considered, we should have fewer controversies about original sin, free-will, divine operations on the mind, faith, good works, the nature and extent of the price of redemption, election and predestination to life. We should also perceive

the fallacy of some inferences drawn from the doctrines of sovereign Grace by its friends, and triumphantly echoed by its foes. Had the Fathers and the Schoolmen been better acquainted with moral obligation, and the true principles of moral science, they would never have given us so many fanciful interpretations of scripture, nor have been so frequently inconsistent with themselves.

SECT. III.

Erroneous views respecting the DIVINE PREROGATIVE.

§ 1. That God is absolutely *supreme*, and his will in some respects *arbitrary*, is universally acknowledged. § 2. But not arbitrary in judgments and punishments. § 3. What implied in the Prerogative of Sovereignty. § 4. Evidence of its exercise toward mankind, from the revealed fact of Salvation provided. § 5. From the proclamation of mercy. § 6. From awful sanctions proving ineffectual; and § 7. From the joint considerations of human imbecility and the effects produced on some minds, § 8. Others have no ground of complaint. § 9, 10. God, in the exercise of Sovereign Prerogative, is no respecter of persons. § 11. Man has great need of its exercise. § 12. Its exercise is injurious to none.

§ 1. THAT God is absolutely supreme, is an acknowledged fact; and that in some respects and instances he is sovereign, that is, arbitrary, must be also allowed by every reflecting person. To what else can be ascribed the existence of the created universe, and the differences of material beings of which it is composed? What a sovereign variety is discoverable in the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal world! How various their natures, their properties, and their designed ends! These things are generally confessed, as they do not immediately affect the principles of morality and religion. But no sooner do we extend the sovereign prerogative to the human mind, than the trumpet of alarm is loudly sounded, as if some great injury to man were the necessary consequence. These

fears, however, are utterly groundless; we need only understand the subject, in order to restore our tranquillity, provided our tempers and dispositions are not depraved. We shall then not only acquiesce with submission, but also adore with gratitude.

§ 2. It is inconsistent with the divine perfections to suppose that God acts arbitrarily towards his creatures, except in the communication of good. The very notion of judgments or punishments, implies that they are deserved by those on whom they are inflicted: and even the manner of the infliction is not, properly speaking, *arbitrary*, except when there is a favourable deviation from the rigid claims of justice. Though mankind are sometimes afflicted with the sword, pestilence, or famine, still they might say with truth, "It is of the Lord's *mercies* that we are not consumed" to a greater degree, and in a more dreadful manner. Justice in every manifestation of it is indeed *supreme*, as is every attribute of the Deity, but never arbitrary. Had CALVIN duly reflected on this fundamental principle, he would not have disfigured his admirable pages with a reprobating decree; nor would many other valuable writers have attempted to soften the sentiment by the self-contradictory notion of a *decree to permit* moral evil.

§ 3. The divine prerogative of sovereignty which is here asserted, is that of communicating *good* of any kind, in any degree, and in whatever manner God pleases. Hence we find, that different persons have not only a greater portion of corporeal beauty and strength, but also a greater degree of mental capacity than others. And in this respect the words of the Apostle are apposite; "Who maketh thee to differ from another; and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"* Whatever mental quality differs from another for the better, is from the sovereign pleasure of God, who worketh all such things according to the infinitely wise counsel of his will. It was this sovereign pleasure that formed all the laws of the universe, and has given to to all intelligent creatures an accountable existence.

§ 4. It enters into the essential nature of accountability, that the subject of it is, in his own nature, liable to transgress. And we all are constrained to acknowlege it, as an awful and alarming fact, that all mankind are transgressors, whereby they are adverse to the holiness and justice of the supreme Governor, and

* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

whereby, as a necessary consequence, the same glorious attributes are adverse to them, in the same degree. From the divine prescience no future state of man, or any individual event was concealed. Hence the exercise of the divine sovereignty in a plan of mercy. All mankind, if left to feel the just demerit of sin, must have continued in guilt and misery. But now, in virtue of an atoning substitute in our nature, provided by sovereign mercy, a ministry of reconciliation is established. A proclamation is gone forth, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." The gospel of the kingdom was ordered to be published among all nations, and to be proposed to every human creature capable of attending to it.

§ 5. Now let us enquire, *Who believes the report?* The natural man understandeth not the things that are spiritual, nor can he know them, because, in order that they may savingly profit, they must be spiritually discerned. Millions turn a deaf ear to the call of wisdom, though they cannot object to the plan, without at the same time displaying their folly. "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the

scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."* This is the language of merciful wisdom to the human race: and shews the compassion of God towards the ignorant and wicked; the obligations of men to turn to God by submission and repentance; and, a gracious promise annexed, which would be fulfilled upon their compliance.

§ 6. As the promise of divine favours is proposed to men on an equitable condition, the alternative of refusal is accompanied with an awful threatening. "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they have hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they

* Prov. i. 20—23.

eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."* In this awful passage of God's holy word, we observe these particulars: First, that the persons addressed, however wicked, must possess all the requisites of moral obligation: Secondly, that a refusal of what is in itself so reasonable, deserves the severest punishment: Thirdly, that the nature of this punishment is the righteous opposition of God to their wickedness, that they eat the fruit of their own way, and are filled with their own devices: Fourthly, that there is a period beyond which God will not wait to be gracious. Slighted mercy to the end of life, leaves the wicked in fear, distress and anguish.

§ 7. The question again returns, *Who believes the report?* The answer is, They to whom "the arm of the Lord is revealed." They who are made "willing in the day of his power." They into whose hearts a divine light shines, that they may be enabled to recognize the voice and design of divine wisdom. All men to whom the call and the warning are addressed ought to submit and obey, but all yield obedience and

* Prov. i. 24—33.

submission. On what rational or scriptural principle can we found the difference of result? If we renounce the divine prerogative of shewing additional mercy to some, of taking away the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh, of putting his fear in their hearts, and of opening them by his gracious influence to receive the truth,—are we not chargeable, at the same time, with an attempt to contract the exercise of his beneficence? What can be a greater affront to the supreme Majesty, than to fix the limits of his bounty by our own imperfect standard?

§ 8. The question is not, Why does not God impart converting grace to *all?* For our opponents do not think it right that he should impart it to *any*, until they shew *of themselves* first a willing mind. The proper question therefore is this: Why should we suppose that God does more, in the way of preventing internal grace, for some, than for others, while all, in themselves considered, are supposed to be equally undeserving? The true answer is, because his favours are *his own*, and he has a sovereign prerogative "to do what he will with his own." For this reason the fallen angels have no right to reclaim against God, that he has provided a Mediator, and a plan of mercy through him, for the recovery of myriads of the human

race, while no such provision is made for the restoration of any one of their number. And for the same reason the major part of the human race, immersed in idolatry and superstition, will have no ground to object, in the day of final judgment, against their Maker and Judge, that they were not favoured with the message of reconciliation, that they had not the same motives presented to them to induce them to repentance and conversion.

§ 9. That God in the character of a *Judge* has "no respect of persons," but gives to every one his due, is fully acknowledged. In this view, he regards neither high nor low, rich nor poor, princes nor peasants, Jew nor Greek, Christian nor Mahometan, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free; but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. If we assert, however, that no one is *enabled* to believe repent, and obey, *more* than another, we deny to God the prerogative of a Benefactor. If we accuse him of unworthy *partiality*, on supposition that he communicates to some more than to others a principle of grace, whereby they are spiritually enabled to obey the heavenly call, we arraign his wisdom and goodness at the bar of our own ignorance and folly. Every such objection proceeds on this fundamental error, that all are alike worthy

of divine favours; whereas the truth is, that all are *alike unworthy*. In the former case, a partial distribution would be unjust, but not so in the latter. If all *nations* were equally worthy, all other nations might justly remonstrate against the partiality of Jehovah towards Israel; and if all *persons* were equally worthy, all other persons might justly object that they are less favoured than Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David, or Solomon, John the Baptist, the virgin Mary, or the apostles John, Peter, or Paul, &c. Equality of worthiness establishes a just claim; but an equality of unworthiness leaves room for the full exercise of a sovereign Prerogative, ever administered in wisdom.

§ 10. Some indeed have supposed, as we have seen from CHRYSOSTOM and THEODORET, whose opinions the Bishop of Lincoln seems to regard with complacency, that such partiality is subversive of rewards and punishments. But this proceeds on a false notion of the Rule of final Judgment, as if it were by the source of ability that the Judge will decide, rather than by the law of rectitude, which requires a good character and conduct. If these be approvable in the view of divine legislation, irrespectively of the source from whence they proceeded, it is all that an equitable Judge can demand. To suppose a demur to arise from the

consideration of a wicked character not having had preventing grace, as a reason of his not being punished; or of a righteous character having had preventing grace, by which he was enabled to become such, as a reason why he should not be rewarded; would be indeed most thoroughly subversive of all judicial proceedings.

§ 11. Will it be urged, that none of the human race have any *need* of inward preventing grace? Then, indeed, the bounty in question would be extremely superfluous. But I suspect some ambiguity in the terms, by which the objector is deceived. A thing may be needful for one end, which is not so for another; and to argue from the one to the other would be fallacious. It is granted that none of the human race have need of this bounty, in order to render them obliged and accountable: and this is equally true of the worst and the best of characters. If the latter of these be asked, whether they had any need of special grace in order to render them what they are, I believe the general answer would be in the affirmative. However great the difference, they will acknowledge distinguishing grace, by the exercise of a divine sovereign Prerogative, to be the efficient cause of it. Nor is it supposable that any characters finally condemned by the righteous Judge, will imagine that they had no "need" of what they

formerly despised. What is not needful to clear the character of the Judge, or to vindicate his condemnation of the guilty, may be very needful to change their hearts, and to secure their happiness. But as all revealed blessings are proposed to men in a conditional form, and these conditions are perfectly equitable, they have no plea for transferring the blame from themselves. Though parents, or masters, or ministers, have neglected their duty towards them; though wicked men or wicked spirits tempted them to walk in evil ways; and though providential goodness furnished them with that plenty which proved the occasion of pride, luxury, haughtiness, and other evil passions; still they have no exculpating plea. The wicked man must die in his wickedness; and those who have voluntarily neglected their duty towards him, or enticed him to evil, shall bear their own portion of guilt.

§ 12. Nor can it with truth be asserted that this exercise of the divine Prerogative would be injurious to any. Not to the subject of grace; for the very design of it is to make him better and happier. It implies no force upon his freedom; he is equally free to good and evil as he was before. The difference is, that after he has received the light and life of grace, he freely chooses the good which he before refused; and freely refuses the evil which he

before chose. Nor can it be injurious to any other. For what possible injury can it be to those among whom his lot is cast, or to the world at large, that a sinner is converted from the error of his ways? On the contrary, it may be of great advantage to many. His upright conversation, his holy affections, his heavenly discourse, his faithful testimonies, and his salutary warnings, may do incalculable good, as in the case of St. Paul. He may, indeed, prove an innocent occasion of exciting a persecuting spirit and conduct, or the evil passions of envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness; and so was the spotless character of the Saviour himself; but is this inflicting an injury upon those who are so wrought upon? Oh no! They receive no injury which does not proceed from themselves. There is not, in short, a single being in the universe who can be fairly said to be injured by the preventing grace of God, and the exercise of his Prerogative to confer discriminated favours.

SECT. IV.

Wrong Notions respecting the ULTIMATE SOURCES *of Virtue and Vice.*

§ 1. Why many have supposed that the *Will* is the *ultimate* source of virtue and vice. § 2. The *absurdity* of that sentiment exposed. § 3. The apparent *reason* why several of the Christian Fathers adopted this notion. § 4. The immediate *source* of vice is not the will but the *Heart*. § 5. The real *cause* of an evil heart. § 6. How this cause may be *counteracted*. § 7, 8. Wisdom and Folly illustrative of the nature and character of Virtue and Vice. § 9. Remarks on *Virtue*, as to what is *essential*, and what *perfective*. § 10. Concluding observations respecting *Vice*, its nature and cause.

§ 1. THERE is great reason to think that many sensible persons have been betrayed into the notion of a self-determining property in the human will, from the assumed principle, that the will itself is the ultimate source of virtue and vice: and this assumption they have, no doubt, been induced to make, from the acknowledged fact, that there is neither virtue nor vice in human actions *without* the determination of the will. But the will's determination being essential to the moral quality of a human action, does by no means prove that it is the ultimate source of that action. The exercise of the intellect is no less essential, than that of the will, but no one can thence infer that it is the ultimate source of virtue and vice. What is now

contended for, is briefly this; that the ultimate source of virtue, and of every good moral action, is GOD, from whom all good in the universe proceeds: or, if we seek for a source, considered as existing in the human mind, it is a gracious principle, the effect of a sovereign energy. And it is further maintained, that the ultimate source of all vice, is A NEGATIVE PRINCIPLE OF DEFECTIBILITY, whereby actions physically good become morally evil.

§ 2. The advocates for self-determination, by supposing the will to be the ultimate source of moral actions, are constrained to hold this absurdity, that things diametrically opposite in their nature, as virtue and vice, proceed from the same ultimate source,—which is the same as to maintain, that things directly opposite in their nature proceed from that which has the same uniform nature! Not only the same conduit, the will, may be the medium of conveying at different times both sweet water and bitter, which we admit, but also that they spring from the same fountain! When the apostle James assures us that "every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above, from the Father of lights," it is implied that things of a different quality do not come from that source. A good will, if any thing in our world, is included in St. James's assertion; and a bad will is

included in other things of a different quality. God therefore, and not the human will, is the ultimate source of virtue. When he enlightens the mind, and influences the heart, according to his sovereign Prerogative, in a greater or less degree, free virtuous actions will be the sure effects. The determination of the will, indeed, is a condition *sine qua non* of the virtuous quality of its act; but without grace in the heart, and without a communication of that grace from God, there could not be one virtuous act, in the proper sense of this epithet, among either men or angels. He who would deny this, would also deny that God is the fountain of all good, a truth which ought surely to be admitted, by all persons professing *Christianity*, as an undoubted axiom.

§ 3. And yet this proposition, so evident in sacred scripture, and so approvable by unbiassed reason, was very strangely called in question by some of the Fathers, when they asserted that good actions are only *permitted*,—and that the '*beginning*' must be from ourselves, not only in point of obligation, but in point of fact. Surely such a representation, so far from being the language of heavenly wisdom, instructing mankind, betrays a lamentable want of it. If they reflected at all, when penning such phrases, they must have proceeded on the supposition that

otherwise our *bad* actions would be from God. The recoil from one extreme carried them to another. They dreaded the impiety of tracing our evil deeds to God's will; and therefore they rashly encountered the opposite danger, as they saw no medium, by fixing upon the human will as the common source of our good and our evil. This indeed is a short method of simplifying the subject, to bring every act of virtue and vice to the same fountain;—but it is to simplify at the expence of revealed religion, and of genuine philosophy.

§ 4. Where, then, it may be rejoined, shall we find the ultimate source of vice, if not in the human will, as a self-determining faculty? I answer, in the HEART, according to the scriptural acceptation of the term. Our Saviour tells us, that "out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man."* This "heart" must be something more intimate and radical than the will; for it is the source of "evil thoughts," as well as of evil words and actions. To an evil heart is often ascribed in scripture, hardness, blindness, impurity, pride, foolishness, grossness, and insensibility. Over an evil heart there is a

* Matt. xv. 19, 20.

veil: and to a blind or hard heart St. Paul imputes ignorance and a darkened understanding."* Solomon addresses fools, as those who have not "an understanding heart."† He observes also, "that the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live."‡ Such things, in short, through different parts of scripture are ascribed to the "heart," as prove decisively that it is a more internal source of moral actions than the will. The exercise of this faculty is both *from* the heart, and *as* the heart. If this be enlightened and wise, so is the choice; but if dark and foolish, the choice is of the same character.

§ 5. It was before granted that the free determination of the will is essential in order to stamp any act as vicious; and it has been shewn that something more intimate than the will is intended by the heart. But the evil quality of the heart is neither from God nor from chance; and yet we cannot deny it to be without a cause, in some sense of this word,—unless at the same time we renounce the fundamental axiom, that there is no effect without a cause. It was for want of ascertaining the real cause of an evil heart, and consequently of vice, that the Fathers are so often found contradicting

* Eph. iv. 18. † Prov. viii. 5. ‡ Eccles. ix. 3.

themselves and one another. These contradictions they would have avoided, had they perceived that the ultimate source of all vice is a negative cause, as contradistinguished from a positive. Had they properly considered the attributes of man, or of any one creature, they might have perceived, that he has not only faculties and qualities which are effects from the first cause, but also a principle of defectibility. While man is in one respect the image or likeness of his Creator, in another point of view he is a *contrast* to him who "knows no variableness, neither shadow of turning." God is independent, all-sufficient, and immutable; but man is a contrast, and the attributes of essential dependence, insufficiency, and mutability, are inseparably attached to his being. A being not possessed of these essential attributes, is not a creature.

§ 6. But though man cannot exist without these negative attributes, he is possessed of active faculties, which are capable of virtue and vice. He has an intellect adapted to perceive a law and its proper sanctions, a will to choose the good and refuse the evil, yet free to adopt either side. While an efficient principle prevails, his choice is virtuous; but while God is neglected, and influence from him is despised or undervalued, the choice is vicious. The source of defectibility in man, can be over-ruled only

by the source of indefectibility in God; and a portion of gracious energy from him, which he never denies to those who seek aright, is man's only security against vice. The most important part of self-knowledge of which man is capable, is to perceive practically and experimentally this essential difference between himself and his Maker.

§ 7. The respective natures of virtue and vice are often expressed by Solomon under the terms wisdom and folly,—and with great strictness of propriety. Pure virtue, like pure wisdom, consists in the choice of a worthy end, and in the adoption of laudable means for attaining it. Partial virtue, like partial wisdom, is often found in wicked men. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." They have the wisdom of the serpent, are wise to do evil; and were their end worthy, while their dexterity in the choice of means is admirable, they would shew themselves truly wise and virtuous. In real virtue something is essential, and something perfective. What is essential, is the choice of a chief end; what is perfective, is the adoption of laudable means. Hence, a person may be essentially virtuous, without being so perfectively. And this is the character of "the children of light" in general. They choose God for their chief good; but often fail in the means of attaining perfect

conformity to his will and holy nature. And they have always reason for deep humiliation, when repeated long experience proves to them their imperfection of skill in accomplishing their end. They delight in the law of God after the inner man, but how to perform that which is good, perfectively of their virtue and holiness, they find not.

§ 8. On the other hand, many of "the children of this world," though vicious characters, may choose a variety of ends, more or less worthy in a partial sense, and discover an admirable degree of dexterity in the choice of means adapted to accomplish the end they have chosen. But if they choose not God as their chief end and final portion, their virtue is essentially defective; and so is their wisdom. They are wise for time, but fools for eternity. Neglecting God, they have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hearts to perceive their best and highest interest. With him is the fountain of life, and while they restrain prayer before him, they confirm their state, by voluntary omissions, as dead in sin, and in the moral error of their ways. And they but too often despise those who act in a different manner; — "but wisdom is justified of her children."

§ 9. Before this discussion is closed, it may be remarked, that a failure even in the perfective

part of virtue has in it the nature of sin. He who keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, becomes a transgressor. He who knows and loves God is essentially virtuous, though partially defective; and he who knows and loves not God, is essentially vicious, whatever other excellencies he may possess. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," for it is the essential part of holiness and virtue; but the want of it is a breach of the whole law, and stamps a character as essentially vicious, and his every moral act has the nature of vice. There are many worthy ends, taking this epithet to denote worthiness in a subordinate sense, and many laudable means, including laudableness to any indefinite degree, which ends and means, though harmoniously combined, do not raise the subjects of them above the charge of being essentially vicious. And this is owing to the want of a worthy ultimate and *chief* end to which all others ought to be subordinated. A person destitute of the knowledge and love of God, who is the chief good, and therefore ought to be the chief end of the agent, cannot justly plead that he is essentially virtuous because he is, in an inferior sense, a good father, master, neighbour, or patriot; because he shuns many reigning vices, and promotes many virtuous designs. True virtue is not confined within any created circle, and aims at nothing short of infinite, even in the discharge of common duties.

§ 10. From the preceding account of the ultimate sources and the respective natures of virtue and vice, we may perceive that vice is a species of *defect* in moral actions. A vicious act is a *wrong* act, and the wrong quality is a *defective* one—the want of what ought to be in the exercise of free volitions. But we cannot thence infer that the *principle* of the defect is itself vicious, since the exercise of a voluntary choice is an essential part of vice. Hence it follows demonstrably that the ultimate source of vice is not vicious. There is no vicious act which is not compounded of something positive, and therefore good, and of something negative or defective, and therefore evil in a comparative sense. The goodness of the act is its physical energy, which flows from God; the badness of the act is its moral defect, or a failure in the *manner* of exercising the physical faculties, when they are voluntarily directed to a wrong end, or to means of attaining it which are not laudable. Were there no principle of defectibility in the agent, every act would be perfectly virtuous; and were that principle itself of a vicious quality, in a moral sense, there would be no difference between cause and effect: vice would be the cause of vice, which is incompatible.

SECT. V.

The want of requisite acquaintance with reconciling Principles.

§ 1. For want of reconciling principles, the Bishop rejects the doctrine of universal and total *depravity*. § 2. Confounds physical *powers* and moral *propensities*. § 3. *Nature* and *grace*. § 4. The *passiveness* of man, with his *agency*. § 5. Divine *Equity*, with *Sovereignty*. § 6. *Exhibited* grace, with *subjective*. § 7. Faith as a *principle*, with faith as a *duty*. § 8. He confounds the *different relations* which are sustained by a justified person. § 9. The *price* of redemption, with *redemption* itself. § 10. That Predestination which includes a *series* of events, with one that is *isolated* and imaginary.

§ 1. FROM the manner in which the Bishop has treated the different topics contained in his "Refutation," and from his numerous quotations from the Fathers, it is manifest, that many things are advanced through the apprehension of consequences that would follow from a different statement of those opinions; which consequences however his Lordship might have seen would not follow, had he been more attentive to reconciling principles; those I mean, which are necessary in order to reconcile scripture with scripture, and facts with facts. For instance, his Lordship seems to apprehend that if we go so far as to maintain a universal and total moral depravity of mankind by the fall of Adam, it would imply a natural impossibility of recovery,

or even of any improvement. He supposes it would exclude every voluntary effort, endeavour, or concurrence on the part of man—every idea of distinction between right and wrong—every good affection and moral sense. He also apprehends that the admission of such a degree of moral depravity must render men incorrigible, absolutely incapable of amendment, or of discharging any part of duty—must reject all co-operation, and all improvement by discipline and exercise. If moral depravity be represented as universal and total, he prognosticates consequences if possible still more alarming; as if, none could act according to the determination of reason—all men, in every period, must be alike wicked—neither patriarchs nor prophets could address the people, nor the people be addressed by them—propensities, affections, and faculties, would be incapable of controul, cultivation and enlargement—there would exist no discrimination of moral character—and there could have been no righteous characters in the time of Christ—no good and honest hearts. These are his Lordship's alarming apprehensions.

§ 2. Does it not strike every intelligent person who reflects upon the subject, that his Lordship has most unaccountably overlooked the distinction, which ought ever to be maintained, between *physical powers*, or faculties, and *moral*

propensities? To infer the destruction of the former, from that of the latter, is as unreasonable as it would be to infer, that not a chord of a stringed instrument remained undestroyed, because the instrument is become universally and totally out of tune; whereas an instrument may be thus of out tune, though every string remain entire; wanting only the skilful treatment of an artist to render it capable of producing sounds of sweet and varied harmony, as at the first. Such is the energy of divine grace upon the mind. As no physical faculty was destroyed by sin, so no one is added by sovereign grace. The infinitely wise author of our being, by his never-failing skill, makes the ignorant knowing, the foolish wise, the reluctant willing, the dead lively, the slothful vigilant. He who before murmured, gloomy and dissatisfied, now feels his heart glow with gratitude, and speaks the language of praise: he who before cursed, now blesses: he who before lifted up his voice in strife and contention, now pours forth prayers and supplications according to the will of God. He was deceitful, he is now upright; he was envious, he is now benevolent; he was consumed with unhallowed attachments; he is now devoted to the love of God and his neighbour. "Instead of the thorn is come up the fir-tree, instead of the bramble is come up the myrtle-tree."

§ 3. Another distinction overlooked by his Lordship is, that existing moral differences among mankind are to be ascribed to grace rather than to nature. Some worthy characters, some well-disposed persons, some good and honest hearts, have been found in every age of the world. But how unreasonable to infer from these acknowledged facts, that the difference is derived from natural excellence rather than from supernatural grace. From the fact of one human character in any period of time being far superior to others, how illogical the conclusion that he has made himself to differ, or that nature has left him less impaired. It is most unfairly to beg the question, that all good is not from God; or, that there may be some moral excellence among men which flows not from divine grace. Admit this principle, that grace, not nature, forms the difference, and scripture will harmonize with scripture; deny it, and contradictions appear in all its parts. Whether his Lordship has not commited himself in this respect, every attentive reader may easily perceive. While truth is ever consistent with itself, when viewed through a just medium, it is the property of error to refute its own pretensions. One while it states that all mankind are 'depraved,' with 'a propensity to evil and wickedness, universal 'in its extent and powerful in its effects;' another while, it extenuates the statement by

pleading that some of these very persons were so 'righteous' as to be 'acceptable in the sight 'of God,' without any acknowledgement of divine grace. What though 'the heart, the passions, 'the will, and the understanding, and indeed all 'the faculties and powers of Adam, were *greatly* 'corrupted, perverted, and impaired by his vio-'lation of the divine command;' and what though 'every individual descended from him be born 'into the world an imperfect and depraved crea-ture;' still the corruption was not *so great* but there have been *some* worthy characters in every period of time! For we have upon record the excellencies of Abel, Enoch, and Noah; of Abraham, Isaac, and Job; beside "seven thousand in Israel, who had not bowed their knees to Baal!"

§ 4. His Lordship does not seem to have been aware of the passiveness of man as inseparably connected with his agency. If man were *merely* an agent, what conceivable ground of his happiness would there be in the nature of things? Absolutely exempted from the influence of preventing grace, while, undeniably, free from controul in his choice, every man might fail alike of happiness. Admitting human depravity to be precisely what his Lordship admits; I ask, what is there in the nature of things that can secure the salvation of any

individuals, except the prerogative and grace of God giving him a good will? On the other hand, if man were *merely* passive, he could not be accountable for his actions: laws and sanctions would be useless things, and future judgment an unmeaning ceremony. Separate one of these attributes from the being of man, and nothing is rationally explained; the whole of the scriptural representation of him becomes an inexplicable paradox; rather, a series of perpetual contradictions. Admit the fact, and the whole appears lucid and beautiful, coherent and harmonious.

§ 5. Another principle of the utmost importance, closely connected with the preceding, and greatly overlooked by his Lordship and the Fathers, is the union of Equity and Sovereignty in the divine character. Not that either is denied in words, but their appropriate exercise is not brought into the account. In his Lordship's theory, Sovereignty has no effect *in* man, but only *towards* him in providing a Saviour. Every principle of discrimination *originates* with man, though in a fallen state; and every act of after bounty is only an exercise of Equity in rewarding the creature's goodness. In a word, the whole is reduced to this one view of God, a merciful Governor. All that sovereign mercy does, is to provide moral means, not allowed to

fallen angels, and then justice engages to reward the worthy. But this is to limit "The Holy one of Israel" in that very point wherein man most needs his assistance, and in the exercise of mercy wherein God delights. It is an attempt to confine the hand of omnipotence with the filmy cord of contingency; to restrain the divine prerogative within the narrow confines of human self-sufficiency. Nay, more, it is to found the exercise of gracious power on human moral ability; and the exercise of mercy on human moral worthiness. In such a system every thing must appear confused and contradictory; the perfections of God, and the attributes of man, are continually at variance. But if you admit that God governs his creatures, as free agents, with equity, and bestows favours upon them, as passive, with unrestrained sovereignty, to "the praise of the glory of his grace;" the perplexity is unravelled, the scriptures appear no longer a labyrinth, and seeming discordances are satisfactorily reconciled.

§ 6. Many contradictions might have been avoided by his Lordship, had he attended to the difference between *exhibitory* and *subjective* grace. Any reflecting reader of the "Refutation" may perceive how the Bishop and the Fathers perpetually confound these essentially different considerations. The provision of mercy in a plan

of mediation; God's gift of his beloved Son as our Saviour; his affording, to the fallen race of man, a divine revelation; the proclamation of peace by the ministry of reconciliation; the display of gracious designs in gospel institutions; with the promise of his Holy Spirit to the believing, pardon to the penitent, and eternal salvation to obedient Christians,—are all expressive of *exhibitory* grace. These representations are only suitable means of a gracious moral government; they put no law in the mind, they open no blind eyes, unstop no deaf ears, unlock the door of no heart, without *subjective* grace. To the former belongs a universality of aspect and intention; it is the glad tidings of great joy sent to all nations, as in the course of providence a door of access is opened: it is grace in its external dispensation, proposed to free agents, who are the subjects of a gracious moral government. To the latter belongs the actual existence of divine influence in the souls of individuals, whereby they are enriched with life and light, and whereby exhibited blessings become effectual to salvation. To the one, the agency of man stands essentially related; to the other, his passiveness as a subject of antecedent benefits. Without exhibitory grace, how could any be judged according to the gospel? Without subjective grace preventing us that we may have a good will, what soul could be saved?

§ 7. Many discordant passages in his Lordship's discourse about *faith*, are owing to an oversight of the momentous difference subsisting between this grace considered as a principle and as a duty. In the former sense, it is the gift of God; in the latter, it is the act of man. The promises made to faith, regard it as the act and duty of man; who, on believing, receives justification, and grace for grace. By faith, in this sense, the believer looks unto Jesus, trusts in him for righteousness and strength, relies upon the promises, overcomes the world, and walks in the path of duty. By faith, in the other sense, he is made morally able to belive with the heart, and to perform, in the way of duty, other fiducial acts required. The one is, in a sense, of ourselves, because it is our own act; the other is exclusively from God, who quickeneth whom he will, and who bestows his blessings, as a sovereign Benefactor, according to the profundity of his wisdom. Faith, as a duty, is itself a good work, and draws other good works in its train, as exemplified in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; but faith, as a principle, is no good work of ours, but "of the operation of God," *enabling* the soul "to do those things which are pleasing in his sight." Faith, as a divine principle, or when taken figuratively for its object, or for its foundation, stands opposed to works, in several

passages of the apostolic writings; but faith, as a duty, is included in works.

§ 8. Some incongruities are obvious in the chapter which treats of *justification* for want of distinguishing the different relations which a justified person bears. In scriptural acceptation, a person is considered as *justified* in *Christ*, by *grace*, by *faith*, and by *works*. Justification in *Christ*, expresses the relation of union to him, effected by an act of divine sovereign prerogative. Justification by *grace*, expresses the relation of our personal unworthiness, who, had it not been for grace providing a substitute, must have continued guilty, and under condemnation. Justification by *faith*, expresses the relation of an arraigned criminal who is set at the bar of divine justice to plead his defence in opposition to the charge of being destitute of a perfect righteousness. A perfection of righteousness is required by divine law and justice; and in this respect it is hopeless to appeal to "works of righteousness which we have done." Divine revelation affords a testimony respecting Christ, that he is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" this testimony, and his belief in it, the arraigned criminal pleads in his defence, and is regarded as justified. Justification, by *works*, expresses the relation of a moral subject perpetually amenable to the law

of right and wrong, commonly termed the the moral law. In meeting this charge, it is not enough to plead that Christ is the end of the law, that grace has prepared a remedy, and that the divine testimony is believed; for these pleas have been and still are admitted. It may be urged, you are still amenable to a rule of moral obedience, which, if you despise, it is a proof that your plea of an interest in the former privileges is a shallow pretence: since no one who has a genuine regard for, and faith in Christ, rejects his yoke. Bring the genuineness of your faith and the sincerity of your profession to this test. "Shew me thy faith by thy works." As the charge is *want of works*, it is evident that no plea can be urged for justification from the charge, but the actual works required. And as these are justifying evidences in this life, so they will be at the last judgment, when the enquiry will be instituted, not only what have you believed, but also what have you done?

§ 9. In examining the "Refutation" we have met with some incongruous passages respecting *redemption*, which might have been avoided by means of the important distinction between the price, or valuable consideration, and the actual deliverance. The former is indefinite, as appears from the nature of the demand; the obedience and sacrifice must be of

infinite worth, or else of no worth at all, to answer the demands of law and justice. What is of infinite value cannot be in itself restricted; and therefore its aspect, when revealed and proposed to men, must necessarily be indefinite. But actual deliverance is a *personal* concern. Christ having assumed our nature, lived a perfect character, and died a meritorious death, abstractedly considered, actually delivers no person. This latter benefit is a definite effect for the sake of an infinite, and therefore indefinite price. The *means*, or the price, of redeeming us from the curse of the law, was the Saviour's being made a curse for us; but the redemption itself is our personal deliverance from guilt and condemnation, from sin and the power of satan, and from the grave.

§ 10. In treating of Predestination to life, his Lordship, as we have seen at large, has offered great violence to the Articles of his own Church, and has made them speak a language replete with contradiction. This he might have escaped, if he had regarded Predestination as a divine purpose respecting a *series* of beneficent events, instead of regarding it, as he has done, in an isolated point of view. That predestination, and that only, is consistent with itself, which never separates the means from the end, but includes the former as indispensably

requisite to attain the latter. Under his Lordship's hand, while this connection is overlooked, the wholesome doctrine which "is full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comforts to godly persons," is rendered to the last degree noxious and unlovely. In brief, he who professes that all our *good* and all our *happiness* must be ultimately referred to the divine beneficence and purpose, cannot renounce the predestination we hold, but at the expense of consistency with his own profession.

Chap. VII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE EXCELLENCY OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE, AND ON THE BEST WAY OF OBTAINING IT.

§ 1. The particular *design* of this chapter. § 2. The *Excellency* of Religious Knowledge. § 3. *Advancement* in this knowledge strongly enjoined in the holy scriptures. § 4. Proficiency in it *beneficial* to ourselves and others, even in *private* life. § 5. Especially to *public* instructors; and § 6. To *disputants*. § 7. The *importance* of it further appears from its influence on practice.

§ 8. We should seek it, *first*, by the performance of *known duty*. § 9. The folly of neglecting this rule. § 10. This method recommended by the holy scriptures; and § 11. Justified on rational principles. § 12, 13. We should seek it, *secondly*, by the exercise of *Christian Candour*. § 14. *Thirdly*, by forbearing to *systematize* without *extensive information*; and especially § 15. *Fourthly*, by cultivating a *devotional temper*.

§ 1. Having completed the proposed Examination of the Bishop of Lincoln's "Refutation of Calvinism,"—and ventured to suggest some explanation of the numerous mistakes and inconsistencies which occur in that performance,—I now request the reader's attention to a few Concluding Remarks of a more practical nature. My design is to point out the excellency of religious knowledge, and the best way of obtaining it. In connexion with which, I would fain bear the best testimony in my power against the principle and the operations

of bigotry in polemical discussions; and encourage a liberal and enlarged way of thinking. This is far more worthy of the gospel of Christ, and of the talents with which we are entrusted, than contending for the interest of any external denomination.

§ 2. Of all objects contemplated by mortals, none is of equal excellency and importance with religion: it embraces the sublimest topics that the universe affords, relates to the purest enjoyments, involves our highest interest, and stands immediately connected with endless consequences. Without religious knowledge no man, however distinguished in other respects, can be truly happy, or truly wise. "This is life eternal, that they might *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." * Life is the well-being of any person or thing; and here it denotes that which is peculiar to the immortal soul. The right knowledge of God and of his Christ, therefore, stands immediately related to our eternal well-being.

§ 3. This knowledge being excellent in its nature, and glorious in its effects, it is no wonder that the sacred oracles so warmly recommend a progressive improvement in it. "My son, if thou

* John xvii. 3.

wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her, as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord; and *find the knowledge of God.* For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."* A similar promise we have in the prophets, in a more concise form: "Then shall we *know* if we *follow on* to *know the Lord.*"† An attainment of inconsiderable value would not be represented in this manner by an inspired scribe. The devout Psalmist observes, "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he *teach* in the way that he shall choose.—The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will *shew them his covenant,*" or, his covenant to make them know it.‡ The same sentiment is inculcated in the New Testament as a matter of apostolic exhortation. "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be ye children, but *in understanding be men.*"‖ Therefore *leaving* the principles (the mere rudiments) of the doctrine of Christ, let us *go on unto*

* Prov. ii. 1—6.

† Hos. vi. 3.

‡ Psa. xxv. 12. 14.

‖ 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

perfection."* "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may *grow* thereby." † "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness; but *grow* in grace, and in the *knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" ‡

§ 4. Proficiency in religious knowledge, as appears from the divine records, must be highly beneficial. When Solomon asserts, "that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good," ‖ he evidently includes the counterpart, that the acquisition of knowledge *is* good. "Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness." § Religious knowledge is welcome to the mental eye, and divine truth, as a light shining in a dreary solitude, illuminates the path of duty, and invigorates the moral traveller in the ways of wisdom. Before its benign power the clouds of ignorance dissolve and vanish: and, while it enlarges the understanding, it refines the passions, and purifies the heart. If, however, it is thus peculiarly advan-

* Heb. vi. 1. † 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.
‖ Prov. xix. 2. § Eccles. ii. 13.

tageous to ourselves, it must be highly salutary to others who are within the circle of our influence. Even in a private sphere, we have opportunities of instructing the young and uninformed. If proficients ourselves, we shall impart knowledge with less embarrassment, solve the difficulties of the inquisitive with more ease, and lead them forward with greater delight. Perceiving the harmony of divine truths, with their mutual dependence and connexion, our attachment to them will be more firm, and we shall be enabled to recommend them with becoming zeal and modest confidence.

§ 5. While such advantages attend progressive religious knowledge in private life, how much more advantageous will it be to public instructors. They have a more difficult office to fulfil, and a greater variety of characters to address. The speculative sceptic should have no cause to triumph over the ministers of divine truth, as if they could not meet him on his own ground, and foil him with his own weapons. While he despises and ridicules the doctrines of our religion, let the edge of his boasted reason be turned upon himself. Falsehood cannot endure the test of close examination. If we are but sufficiently acquainted with comprehensive principles, every error may be proved, at least virtually, to be subversive of itself, and

every vice may be shewn to be folly. When, too, the messengers of the King of heaven have enlarged and correct views of revealed truth, in all its parts and bearings, they are better able to give every one his portion of instruction or advice, of reproof or comfort, in due season; better able to judge on what articles of their message to lay the strongest emphasis, what parts ought to be brought most frequently to view, what deviations from truth or duty are most dangerous, and by what means different errors may be most effectually checked or subverted.

§ 6. Polemical discussions, when conducted as they ought to be, are a species of public instruction, being an appeal to the general notice, on the comparative claims of different sentiments. Most disputed points have difficulties which require more than a slight knowledge of the subject: and when any one presumes to correct whole systems of doctrine without suitable information, truth is liable to suffer, and error to be propagated. Yet something more than mere knowledge is necessary for disputants. Controversy conducted without candour, stirs up the worst of passions, indulges in unhallowed recriminations, insinuates suspicions of unworthy designs, rouses the spirit of bigotry from his slumbers, and, while it animates the excesses of

party zeal, weakens the bonds of Christian amity. Divide and conquer is the maxim of an enemy.

§ 7. The great importance of progressive religious knowledge may be estimated from the salutary influence it possesses on Christian duties. It is a valuable guide to profitable devotion and useful practice. Yet we should be on our guard in estimating practice, as well as in deciding upon doctrine. The Jewish Pharisees, who rejected the Prince of Life, were very expert practitioners in their way. But their obedience was not fashioned according to the divine rule; was not directed to a worthy end, did not flow from a right principle. Approved practice includes devotion, the proper exercise of the heart and affections, as well as the external part of service. As a pretended devotion which is not accompanied with the discharge of personal and relative duties, is essentially defective; so our duties without a devotional temper, are but a body without the soul.

§ 8. Having pointed out briefly the excellency of religious knowledge, and some advantages which it is capable of affording, I shall now presume to offer a few words of advice, especially to my younger brethren in the ministry (as the result of long experience,) respecting

its attainment. And, *first*, seek it in the performance of known duty. In this enterprise, our divine Teacher leads the way. "If any man *will do his will*, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."* This is the path, "walk ye in it." Conscientiously improve your talent, and you shall add to it. "To him that hath shall be given." To attempt the depths of knowledge or the heights of speculation by any other process, is to encounter a dangerous voyage with crowded sails, while the ballast has been left behind. "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are *weaned* from the milk, and *drawn* from the breasts."† This reply to the important inquiry implies, that selfish indulgences and immoderate worldly attachments, are incompatible with profitable knowledge. Until the heart and affections are withdrawn and weaned from grovelling pursuits, such as those mentioned in the context, the learner is not qualified to receive even the rudiments of saving knowledge, much less to make a desirable proficiency.‡

* 1 John vii. 17. † Isa. xxviii. 9.

‡ Propheta docet, Doctores, Sacerdotes, Proceres populi, quorum erat tueri integritatem doctrinæ et conciliorum publicorum, adeo longe discessisse à tramite veri, ut plane inepti sint ad veram doctrinam salutis, fundatam in antiqua

§ 9. Some indeed have taught otherwise; urging, not only that indifference to all tenets leaves reason free, but also that religious practice is of little use in order to discern truth, and to guard against error. But it should be remembered that habitual practice forms the character; and therefore a defective practice forms a defective character. He who expects to succeed by defect, "sows the wind and shall reap the whirlwind." When did the ancient Jews become corrupt in doctrine, but when they degenerated in their practice? When did the church of Rome deviate from sound, scriptural principles, substituting the acts of councils and the mandates of presumptuous men, for the oracles of God, but when the clergy and laity became voluptuous, "greedy of filthy lucre," —receiving honour one from another on unauthorized grounds of distinction,—and immoral in their conduct? When men mis-improve or neglect the means of knowledge which God has

doctrina Patriarchali et Mosaica, recte percipiendam et digerendam: Esse enim doctrinam Scholasticam ejus temporis, ad quod ipse respicit, doctrinam accommodatam ad *ingenia puerilia*, qualis fuit Pharisaica; non *masculam*, *solidam*, bene *cohærentem*, qualem oportet esse doctrinam veræ religionis, quæ homini adulto et exercito satisfactura sit: Sed constare *præceptis* traditionum antiquarum nomine commendatis, independentibus et inter se neutiquam cohærentibus. VITRING. in loc.

afforded them, he gives them up to vile affections and judicial blindness, so that they take light for darkness, and darkness for light. Their habits and characters being once formed under the guidance of lust and passion, every thing is viewed through a false medium, and the simplicity of pure truth has no attractive charms. Whatever, under the abused name of religion, administers to pride, ambition, and sensual pleasures, best accords with their acquired habits and depraved principles.

§ 10. As this representation is verified by every page of ecclesiastical history, in every period of the church from the apostolic age to the present time, so it answers to the testimony of scripture, and may without difficulty be accounted for. The love of honour and of pleasure, the love of power and of riches, weaken or exclude the love of God and benevolence to men. "If any man *love the world*, the love of the Father is not in him." "How *can* ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, *because their deeds are evil.* For every one that *doeth evil* hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved." "And because *iniquity shall*

abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Religious knowledge and practice have a reciprocal influence. Practical diligence, in God's appointed way, leads to spiritual wealth. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." And this wealth when acquired, incites to further exertion, and to a more extended sphere of usefulness. "He also that is *slothful* in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster." He that would find the precious ore of knowledge must "search" and "dig" for it; not by perplexing speculations, so much as by "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God:" not so much by the exertion of genius, as by scriptural self-denial; by being ready to distribute, and willing to communicate; by visiting the widow and the fatherless in their affliction; by persevering without weariness in well-doing; by always abounding in the work of the Lord; and by constantly cultivating a purity and simplicity of intention in all his actions. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." When men aim not at glorifying God, and neglect the divine Teacher, they prepare themselves for strong delusions, for embracing error instead of celestial truth.

§ 11. They who *do evil*, and live in a carnal, worldly element, cannot bear the light of holy truth, and the doctrines which are according to

godliness; and consequently their search will be, if they search at all, after those principles which are most indulgent to the ways they like. Thus infidel principles are embraced by many, in order to obtain a quieter retreat from the reproaches of truth, the light of which they cannot or will not endure, because they are determined to make no costly sacrifices, to renounce no carnal indulgences: they resolve in short, to retain the cargo, falsely valued by deceitful fancy, at the hazard of shipwreck: for them to receive gospel truth, would be to entertain that by which they are reproved and condemned. The characters just noticed exhibit, it is true, an extreme case: but the same considerations are applicable to many others who do not depart from truth to the same excess. Though denying the power of godliness, many retain the form of it from political or self-interested motives. They will be friendly to religion as long as religion subserves their particular purposes; but were it not regarded as an useful auxiliary, its intrinsic worth they would despise. In short, he who has most personal and practical religion, in the scriptural acceptation of the term, is the most likely, other things being equal, to arrive at the knowledge of the *whole truth*, as it is in Jesus, because he has the fewest prejudices and hindrances to overcome.

§ 12. In the *second* place, cultivate Christian candour. An enquirer after truth, (and the same is applicable to a controvertist,) if he would prove successful, should be candid, open and ingenuous. No concealments of the force of an objection, no evasion, no caricatures. Every thing of this sort is mean and despicable. Recollect that the contest should be for truth, and not for superiority of skill. If consequences are deduced, let them be deduced honestly: if accusations are preferred, let them be substantiated. It discovers a total absence of generosity to make a man an offender for a word, when that word is no fair exponent of his real sentiments, — designedly to interpret an expression in a sense disapproved by him who employs it. Christian candour implies tenderness and sincere good will even towards those who treat our sentiments with contumely and defiance. Though firm in advancing an argument when that argument appears to be conclusive, it is very far from dogmatizing without proof. Its prevailing desire is, that unadulterated truth may prevail, that God may be glorified among men, and that their immortal welfare may be promoted. It inculcates a humble and cheerful readiness to receive more light, and mingles prayers and devout aspirations for the spread of pure and undefiled religion.

§ 13. Christian candour, moreover, is utterly averse from crafty and politic manœuvres; it disdains to excite unfounded prejudices, nor will it implant a sting in the innocent by deciding on characters and sects in the mass. If conscious of superior evidence, it vaunteth not itself, nor behaveth itself unseemly. Though it censures real faults, it acknowledges all excellencies, and wherever found, with gladness. It pours a tear over erring humanity, and while it admires the patience of heaven in bearing with its perversities, earnestly endeavours to imitate an example so exalted. Depraved and erroneous as men are, it is willing, like charity, to hope the best of all parties. It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Such is Christian candour. May the writer and the reader of these remarks, anxiously covet a larger portion of it!

§ 14. In the *third* place, forbear to systematize without extensive information. Many detached parts of scripture are plain. The well-disposed, without much controversial knowledge or skill in discriminating abstracted truths, may become wise unto piety and salvation. But there is no small danger in attempting to systematize on contracted or on false principles. To justify an endeavour to generalize

detached sentiments, the subject should be viewed on all sides, in all its relations and connections, its antecedents and consequences, its causes and effects. As one part of a religious system should not oppose another, so no part should oppose the sacred oracles. A theological theory which depends in a great measure on mere verbal criticisms for support, deservedly excites our suspicion. It is better to abide by the facts, the histories, the doctrines, and duties of religion, as plainly revealed, without attempting a reconciliation of difficulties, or stating a systematic view of the whole, than to adopt for this purpose vague hypotheses incapable of proof, or uncertain conjectures, the pabulum of scepticism. Men may be good and useful Christians though not versed in systems of divinity, and though destitute of a deep and critical knowledge of many particulars; but in order to correct the systems of others, these ought to be thoroughly known on the points of difference;—and when an unfair statement of them is made, it follows as a plain inference, that this must be owing either to the want of information, or of candour. Before we blame, let us be well informed.

§ 15. In the *fourth* place, enquire after truth and growing knowledge with a devotional temper. An undevout enquirer is almost sure

of being disappointed, because he neglects the source of wisdom. True devotion calms the passions, and improves our love of truth. Connecting every object and event with God, as either appointing or permitting it, it is more likely to lead the mind to view every part of truth or of error in its proper cause. The devout mind has unfeigned pleasure in the divine will, and prevailing desires to know it more fully; and therefore *(cæteris paribus)* there is greater probability of success. And it is worthy of observation, that the most useful men in the church of Christ have been eminent for piety and a devotional spirit. But real devotion is not confined to set times and forms; the subject of it prays without ceasing, and evermore gives thanks to the Father of mercies. In every place and at all seasons, he lifts up his heart to heaven, without wrath or doubting. The word of God is the treasury from whence he draws instruction; but he looks up for the Spirit of Wisdom, that he may have an accurate conception of every part, not neglecting the subordinate helps which are placed within his reach. This method, pursued with diligence, will "give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion;" and will prepare him "to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark

sayings." "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her. Length of days are in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her." "Buy the truth, and sell it not." "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

§ 16. In having thus ventured to submit the foregoing observations to his younger brethren, (a considerable number of whom, he has had the honour and the pleasure of instructing for the Christian ministry, in the course of thirty years,) the writer hopes it is needless for him to disclaim the imputation of considering himself as "having attained," or "being already perfect." Conscious of many deficiencies, and sensible that he has much to learn, he unaffectedly admits, that if in any part of this work he has failed in exemplifying the particulars recommended, he ought to be included in the number

of those to whom the exhortations and directions are peculiarly applicable. Thus much, however, he must be permitted to declare, that as in the controversial part he has opposed no doctrine, advanced no sentiment, and adduced no argument, which he had not deliberately weighed; so he has not ventured to suggest any advice which he is not conscientiously disposed to follow, or to recommend any temper of mind which he does not sincerely desire to cultivate.

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